ANTHONY J. PISCITELLI

THE MARINE CORPS WAY OF WAR

The Evolution of the U.S. Marine Corps from Attrition to Maneuver Warfare in the Post-Vietnam Era

$27.50

The Marine Corps Way of War: The Evolution of the U.S. Marine Corps from Attrition to Maneuver Warfare in the Post-Vietnam Era examines the evolving doctrine, weapons, and capability of the United States Marine Corps during the four decades since our last great conflict in Asia. As author Anthony Piscitelli demonstrates, the USMC has maintained its position as the nation's foremost striking force while shifting its thrust from a reliance upon attrition to a return to maneuver warfare. Piscitelli methodically explains the evolution by using traditional and first-person accounts by the prime movers of this paradigm shift.

In Indochina, for example, the Marines not only held territory but engaged in now-legendary confrontational battles at Hue and Khe Sanh. As a percentage of those engaged, the Marines suffered higher casualties than any other branch of the service. In the post-Vietnam assessment, however, the USMC absorbed Sun Tzu's aspects of Asian warfare and returned to its historical DNA in fighting "small wars" to evolve a superior alternative to the battlefield.

The institutionalization of maneuver philosophy began with the Marine Corps' educational system, analyzing the actual battlespace of warfare—be it humanitarian assistance, regular set-piece battles, or irregular guerrilla war—and the role that the leadership cadre of the Marine Corps played in this evolutionary transition from attrition to maneuver. This change has sometimes been incorrectly portrayed (including by the Congressional Military Reform Caucus) as a disruptive or forced evolution. Analysis from former commandants of the Marine Corps to junior officers on the ground in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere demonstrate otherwise. The ability of the Marines to impact the battlefield—and help achieve our strategic goals—has only increased during the post-Cold War era.

Throughout *The Marine Corps Way of War*, the voices of the Marines themselves, in action or through analysis, describe how "the few, the proud" will continue to be America's cutting-edge force in the future as we move through the 21st Century. This new work is must-reading for not only every Marine, but for everyone interested in the evolution of the world's finest military force.

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SB
Savas Beatie
California

Anthony J. Piscitelli

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Piscitelli, Anthony J., Author.

Title: The Marine Corps Way of War : The Evolution of the U.S. Marine Corps from Attrition to Maneuver Warfare in the Post-Vietnam Era / by Anthony J. Piscitelli.
Description: El Dorado Hills, California : Savas Beatie, [2017] | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2017034702| ISBN 9781611213607 (alk. paper) | ISBN 9781611213614 (ebk.)
Subjects: LCSH: United States. Marine Corps—History. | Maneuver warfare—History. | Attrition (Military science)—History. | Military doctrine—United States—History.
Classification: LCC VE23 .P57 2017 | DDC 359.9/640973—dc23

LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2017034702

First Edition, First Printing

SB

Savas Beatie LLC
989 Governor Drive, Suite 102
El Dorado Hills, CA 95762
Phone: 916-941-6896
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(E-mail) sales@savasbeatie.com

Our titles are available at special discounts for bulk purchases. For more details, contact us us at sales@savasbeatie.com.

All statements of fact, opinion or analysis expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official positions or views of the United States Marine Corps or any other U.S. government agency.

Proudly printed in the United States of America.

FSC www.fsc.org MIX Paper from responsible sources FSC® C011935

This work is dedicated to all the Marines that have come before, that are now Marines and for those Marines who will be our future warriors from the sea.

God's speed, Fair winds, and Semper Fidelis

General Alfred M. Gray Jr., USMC (Ret.), 29th Commandant of the Marine Corps, played a vital role in the post-Vietnam development of maneuver warfare. *USMC*

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Glossary of Abbreviations

AAA: Anti-Aircraft Artillery
AAR: After Action Report
AAV: Amphibious Assault Vehicle
ACMC: Assistant Commandant Marine Corps
AH: Attack Helicopter
AK: AK 47 Russian Assault Weapon
ALMAR: All Marine Communication
ANA: Afghan National Army
AOR: Area of Operational Responsibility
APC: Armored Personnel Carrier
AQ: al QAEDA
ARVN: Army of the Republic of Vietnam
ATW: Anti-Tank Weapon
AVLB: Armored Vehicle Launch Bridge
AWS: Amphibious Warfighting School
AW: All Weather
AWC: Army War College
BIAP: Baghdad International Airport
BLT: Battalion Landing Team
BrigLT: Brigade Landing Team
C2: Command and Control
CAAT: Combined Anti-Armor Team
CANG: California Nat'l Guard
CAD: Combined Air Detachment
CALC: Conventional Air Launch
CAP: Civil Action Program
CAS: Close Air Support
CBIST: Chem. Bio Inspection site team
CDET: College of Distant Ed & training
CENTCOM: Central Command
CFAC: Combined Force Air Command
CFLCC: Coalition Force Land Component Command
CG: Commanding General
CIC: Command Intel center
CID: Criminal Investigative Div
CLT: Company Landing Team
CMC: Commandant Marine Corps
COIN: Counter Insurgency
CONUS: Continental US
CP: Command Post
CSC: Command Staff College
DNA: Master Blueprint
DO: Distributive Operations
DEA: Drug Enforcement agency
EPAC: Eastern Provence area command
EPME: Enlisted Professional Military Education
EPW: Enemy Prisoner of War
EWS: Expeditionary Warfighting School
FA18: Fighter Jet
FAC: Forward Air Controller
FARP: Forward Arm Refuel Helo
FIE: Fly In Echelon
FLIR: Forward Looking Infrared Radar
FMFM: Fleet Marine Force Manual
FMFLANT: Fleet Marine Force Atlantic
FMFPAC: Fleet Marine Force Pacific
FMFRP: Fleet Marine Force Republished Publication
FOB: Forward Operations Base
FROG: Flame Resistant Organizational Gear
FSSG: Forward Supply Group
GBU: Guided Bomb
GDAY: Go Day
GWOT: : Global War on Terrorism
HARM: Anti-Radiation Ordinance
HIDACZ: High Density Airplane Control Zone
HMH Heavy: Hilo Squadron
HMMWV: High Mobility Multi-Wheeled Vehicle
IED: Improvised Explosive Device
ILS: Integrated Logistic support
INTERPET: International Force East Timor
JDAM: Joint Direct Attack Munition
JSTAR: Joint Tactical Radio
JTF: Joint Task Force
JTFAR: Joint Task Force Air
KIA: Killed In Action
KTO: Kuwait Theater of Operations
LAPD: Los Angeles Police Department
LAR: Light Armor Recon Company

LAV: Light Armored Vehicle
LCAC: Landing Craft Air cushioned
LCU: Landing Craft-Utility
LHD: Landing Hilo Deck
LIA: Linear Induction Accelerator
LPD: Landing Platform Dock
M1A1: Abrams Tank
MAD: Mutually Assured Destruction
MAGTF: Marine Air-Ground Task Force
MARDIV: Marine Division
MAW: Marine Air Wing
MAWAS : Marine All Weather Attack Squad
MCCS: MC Command & Staff College
MCDP: Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication
MCLC: Military Coordination & Liaison Command
MCU: Marine Corps University
MCWAR: MC War College
MCWW : Marine Corps Way of War
MEB: Marine Expeditionary Brigade
MEBMAW : Expeditionary Brig. Air Wing
MEF: Marine Expeditionary Force
MEU: Marine Expeditionary Unit
MEUARG : Marine Expeditionary Unit Air
MEU-SOC : Marine Expeditionary Unit Special Ops
MIG: Soviet Made Aircraft
MLRS: Multiple Launch Rocket System
MLSR: Machine Gun Self Loading
MOS: Military Occupational Specialty
MPF: Maritime Prepositioning
MPPS: Maritime Prepositioning
MPS: Maritime Prepositioning
NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCO: Non Commissioned Officer
NFZ: No Fly Zone
NVG: Night Vision Goggles
OCS: Officers Candidate School
OEF: Operation Enduring Freedom
OES: Officer Education System
OIF: Operation Iraqi Freedom
OND: Operation New Dawn
OODA: Boyd Cycle
OP: Operations Post
OPAR: Operations Post Air
PME: Professional Marine Education
POTUS: President of the US
PSYOP : Psychological Operation
PTA: Parents Teachers Association
RCT: Regimental Combat Team
REIN: Reinforced
RET: Retired
RMA: Revolution in Military Affairs
ROE: Rules of Engagement
RPG: Rocket Propelled Grenade
SA: Surface to Air
SAM: Surface to Air Missile
SECDEF: Secretary of Defense
SECNAV: Secretary of the Navy
SIMOL: Somalia
SPMMAGTF : Special Purpose MAGTF
SSE: Sensitive Site Exploitation
TACAIR: Tactical Air
TBS: The Basic School
TOT: Time On Target
UH: Marine Hilo
UNAMET : UN Mission East Timor
UNOSOM : UN Mission Somalia
UNPROFOR : UN Protective Force
USA: US Army
USAF: US Air Force
USD: US Dollars
USN: US Navy
USMC: US Marine Corps
USMCR: US Marine Corps Reserve
VBIED: Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Device
VMFA: Marine Fighter Attack Squadron
VUCA: Volatility Uncertainty Complexity Ambiguity
WIA: Wounded In Action
WMD: Weapon of Mass Destruction
WWI: World War I
WWII: World War II

Foreword

Dr. A. J. "Tony" Piscitelli's *The Marine Corps Way of War* chronicles the history of our Marine Corps as we adopted the philosophy and thought process of maneuver warfare. The history of our Corps during this time frame supported this evolutionary paradigm shift away from the American doctrine of attritional warfare to a maneuver way of fighting, operating, and thinking.

This evolutionary Marine Corps warfighting philosophy is a blend of our history and our unique military doctrine that would keep the Marine Corps relevant in all of our missions and deployments. It requires thinking by enlisted Marines in and out of the "box" as well as their officers. In short, "fighting smarter" was to be the way forward within the Marine Corps as it met the many challenges of being the "First to Fight."

This major accomplishment within the Marine Corps was no easy task at the time. The war in Viet Nam had just ended. Some influential members of Congress were looking for military reform from all the branches of the military. Additionally, reasons for the misperceived loss of American stature or even victory at the end of that conflict in Southeast Asia were issues to be first faced and then resolved by our Marine Corps. Further, within the Corps itself many leaders were questioning why this shift in warfighting philosophy was necessary.

A large cadre of returning Marines officers who had served in Viet Nam wanted to see a change in some of our conceptual thinking, making this

warfighting philosophy a priority for the future. They knew from their experiences that attritional warfare did not serve either them or our country well in Southeast Asia. They also knew that force-on-force attrition would not work in the Cold War environment of the time. In addition to this group of visionary Marines, beginning with the quiet efforts of Commandant Wilson and furthered by Commandants Barrow and Kelley, were others from outside the Corps who were included in this development, lending their experience and military knowledge to achieve the Marine Corps' evolution toward a "fighting smarter" philosophy.

The process of this change took almost 15 years to reach fruition. It proved highly successful in Gulf War I, smaller follow-on actions and humanitarian assists, and in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. Our Marines had evolved into smarter warfighters while still maintaining our iconic ethos and ethics. Education for all Marines, combined with relevant maneuver warfare training methods and continued enhancements of this dynamic warfighting philosophy, has lessened the costs of going to war both in casualty rates and in costs to put our Marines into battle.

This Marine Corps' maneuver warfare philosophy is as dynamic as our Marine Corps itself. This philosophy came about because of the Marines' exceptionalism—a trait that has been validated from the attritional era to today. It has been the mainstay of our Marine Corps, making it the premier fighting force in the world today. The concepts of maneuver warfare are in reality a thought process built on the ideas of concentration, speed, surprise, boldness, friction, uncertainty, disorder, fluidity, philosophy of command, commanders' intent, decision-making, main focus of effort, shaping the situation, and mission tactics. The Marines have always been an opportunistic fighting force, and readiness to go with what they have in their tool kits is their forté.

As I have said many times, 'War is both timeless and ever-changing." While the basic nature of war is constant, the means and methods we use evolve continually. Like war itself, our approach to warfighting must evolve. If we cease to refine, expand, and improve our profession, we risk becoming outdated, stagnant, and defeated. This work is the history of the Marine Corps' evolution toward fighting smarter.

In closing this Foreword, I can only ask that Marine Corps leaders try do as much good as they can, for as long as they can. Their (and our) reward will be very, very special. To the nation's Marine Corps—take care of yourselves, take care of each other, and may God bless you all.

Semper Fidelis,

General Alfred M Gray Jr.
United States Marine Corps (Ret.)
29th Commandant of the Marine Corps

Introduction

There is no better way to illustrate the nature of modern combat faced by today's Marine Corps than by citing an actual account from the battlefield.

The following is from an After-Action Report (AAR) for *Operation Apache Snow II* by Bravo Company, 1st Battalion 9th Marines, which launched an interdiction operation near the Bari Gul Bazaar in the Nad Ali District, Helmand Province, Afghanistan, on December 4, 2013. The actions taken by 1st Lt. James Salka and his Marines exemplify the practice of Marine Corps maneuver warfare.

Approximately 96 Marines, sailors, and Afghan personnel engaged Taliban forces during the 14-hour operation, which included nearly four hours of sustained combat with Islamic insurgents in and around this bazaar. *Operation Apache Snow II* was designed to deny Taliban forces free movement in the area and strike against their ability to gather armaments. A transcription of this video report, which was conducted by platoon commander 1st Lt. James Salka, Bravo Company, 1/9, Washingtonville, New York, and Sgt Steven Pendleton, squad leader, Bravo Company, 1/9, Knoxville, Tennessee, is an excellent example of the use of maneuver warfare tactics employed by Marines in today's battlespace.

"So, obviously the mission was to disrupt the enemy within that area," began Lieutenant Salka, who continued at length as follows:

So we did a partnered heli-borne raid. Since we hit the deck, obviously it was still dark. We started to make movement to the north with our Afghan partners in the lead to kind of push up and talk to some of the people there. And it started to get a little bit light out. We established our security perimeter with machine guns, snipers, as well as mortars and then we pushed our south element from compound to compound. The atmospherics in the area at that time—there's a lot of motorbikes driving around along the peripheries as there usually is prior to an attack. So there was a lot of movement.

Marine Air was reporting what was going on around us. Some families, women, children started to flee the area. Once we started to cross this big, open, muddy field from about half-way through, that's when it began, they opened up on us with machine-gun fire from a couple of different compounds so at that point the Marine security element. . . . Marines started to suppress to allow them to run for cover. During this contact, I was in the middle of that field with the assault element so we got pinned down for a second and then we made the call to move out once we had some good suppression from our machine guns as well as snipers.

"They had positive identification on several enemy fires around us so once they started to engage those targets," continued Lieutenant Salka,

that would alleviate a little bit of pressure on us, and we were able to rebound back to a compound for some cover. We got the vibe right off the bat that we were going to get hit, so everyone's head was on a swivel and then when it happens, of course you don't know where it's going to come from; then at that point it came from about three or four different locations, pretty accurate rounds. One Marine got struck in his Kevlar when we were in that field so they pinpointed us pretty good. Instincts just kick in at that point for all the Marines. They did exactly what they were trained to do. As we were taking contact, I just wanted to make sure that everything is in place to help those Marines out.

Obviously I was pinned down there so I couldn't do too much to assist myself as well as them, but the Marines who were in those security positions already knew what they had to do and they immediately reacted to engage the enemy to alleviate that pressure from us so we could bound back. Once back, I was able to start the battle attack. I had six different elements moving all over the battlefield, just making sure I had positive communication with all of them over the radio on connecting fires so we could keep those Marines safe, which were in the open. Marines are amazing.

Once we took contact, they immediately snapped to and did what they were supposed to do. Like I said, one Marine got shot in the Kevlar, rounds are bouncing off guys' protective armor, then of course that one Marine got struck and we took a casualty at that point. They immediately responded with what they were supposed to do. Marines ran out into the open, dragged him to safety while other Marines were suppressing immediately, given a quick task.

The guys were already sweeping the LZ, securing it first and then getting that casualty ready for extract. So they made my job easy 'cause they knew exactly what they needed to do. It was definitely a big difference with the amount of guys that we have on the deck, Afghans as well as Marine forces.

"Once we land, we definitely have the element of surprise right off the bat but obviously everyone is going to wake up and start to mass around our position, added the lieutenant, "and we don't have any vehicles to provide that cover." He continued:

So kind of moving from compound to compound we expose ourselves to a pretty good amount of risk every single mission. It does give us some advantages in the fact that they don't know exactly where all of us are, which allows our geometries of fire as long as we're tracking where everyone is, to kind of isolate their positions and then neutralize the enemy, which obviously we did plenty of that day.

Sustaining casualties is always a concern of mine as well as all the Marines on the deck. With those Afghans, we've been partnered with them a couple of times. We fought alongside them so we know how each other works and they are in the lead. So they'll be pushing at those compounds first every single time . . . the locals, are pretty scared once the rounds start flying. So they hunker down. They understand we're there for their security but between linguists and the Afghans themselves, it's no problem dealing with the locals and communicating our intent to them because the Marines are definitely feeling it, but again kind of the preparations that go into it is the physical side as well.

So they're well prepared, take a break inside compounds, take that tactical pause, set the conditions if you will and move only when we have cover fires. The Marines made it a little bit easy for me - just their initiative, being able to act on their own accord, knowing the end state. I had to report up to higher as well as push down my commands to my subordinates so the two radio-piece and just battle tracking on the map so I know exactly where everyone is, so then we can have fires which ultimately support us.

Overall, there was probably like a three-hour chunk of time that we were under some pretty heavy fire and then about twenty minutes, thirty minutes of that was real heavy fire. So we're taking medium machine-gun fire, small arms fire, RPG's grenade launchers, and again those are some real accurate rounds, and at the time we seemed to be pinned down inside of a compound.

During this season especially it is a little bit muddier out there as it gets colder going into the rainy season. So that also adds some difficulty for the Marines as we cross these fields getting slowed down and bogged down in the mud. The Marines did their job 100 percent. : The second we took contact, they immediately kicked in and reacted. I was just impressed at how good the Marines did that day and their actions saved that Marine's life.[1]

Sgt. Pendelton completed the After-Action Report as follows:

We pushed into the first compound that was available for us to push into. Once we were there we find out where the compound was that we needed to be at so we kept pushing, kept pushing more north. We went into the compound, talked to a couple of individuals who gave us some good information. Then we started pushing across about 450 meters in open terrain.

Once we started to move across there we were about 200 meters in and started catching good sporadic fire. It's a pretty good rush. It's pretty good to have. It calms you down at the same time. If you're used to it, it will calm you down. It will make everything go a little bit smoother, because most Marines can operate better when they're under pressure.

Our objective was mainly to try to get information, clear the compounds, get information from individuals and see if they could help us out through any Intel

1 Lieutenant James Salka, the executive officer of Company E, Battalion Landing Team 2/6, was awarded the Bronze Star with V for Valor for his heroic service in connection with combat operations against the enemy while serving as the 2nd Platoon Commander, Company B, 1st Battalion, 9th Marines in Afghanistan. His citation reads as follows: "On November 6, 2013, during a helicopter-borne raid against a known insurgent strongpoint, Salka maneuvered his Marines nearly half a mile over open terrain while under machine gun and rocket-propelled grenade fire, toward a waiting helicopter. While taking fire and moving toward the chopper, Salka rescued an injured fellow Marine. Carrying the wounded Marine on his back the length of four football fields, Salka was able to safely evacuate him to the waiting helicopter. Lieutenant Salka's heroic actions preserved the life of the wounded Marine, as well as many others in his platoon, as he selflessly placed himself in peril." *Marine Corps Times*, Salka Bronze Star Award citation.

throughout the village for insurgence. We caught contact with our security element. Usually they would take most of the firepower off of us so we can continue to clear. But we were getting hit from three different directions so we had to continue and help the security element out.

Going to the compound, my first step is to just make sure everyone gets to that next compound alive. Once we get over there, we support the ATF 444, let them do their clear piece, they do whatever they need to do to try to get kind of Intel and then we get ready.

We sit in a firewall over there just in case we do catch contact. It's different. You don't really know what to expect when you go in there. It could be booby-trapped or if there's ID's everywhere or narcotics or anything. And if that would be the case, we'd call up our air support element and they'd come in there and take care of it. It's a lot different because you've never really seen the terrain when we work up the terrain model. Hopefully get as much knowledge as we can about the place before we land and you don't really know if you're going to land in the right spot or not. So once you land, you're trying to get everything ready, trying to figure out where you're at, trying to get the grids. Once you get the grids, find out where you're at, it's kind of simple but there would be no lume (illumination) on that last mission. It was hard to see where you were going.[2]

This is but one short piece in the ongoing story of the U. S. Marine Corps philosophy of fighting smarter. I call it "The Marine Corps Way of War." As will be seen, *Apache Snow II* was prosecuted by Marines educated and trained quite differently than their 9th Marines forebears who waged *Apache Snow I* in Vietnam in 1968.[3]

2 Video: Interview: "1/9 Firefight During Lethal Aid Interdiction in Afghanistan," 2013. DOD, Nad Ali District, AF: www.dvidshub.net/video/311736/interviews-1-9-firefight-during-lethal-aid-interdiction-afghanistan#.UyHHLT9dXT5, accessed March 31, 2014. I also exchanged emails with Lieutenant Salka and conducted a taped interview.

3 Lieutenant Salka interviews, email and telephone, together with information on the video noted in note 2 above.

Chapter 1

The Marine Corps Way of War

The concept of maneuver warfare is not new in military history, and may even have reached its apex during the Middle Ages, when armies of horse-mounted steppe warriors ran roughshod over central and southern Asia and eastern Europe. The mobile hordes were finally stopped by the development (within sedentary civilizations) of firepower, after which a set-piece force held sway on battlefields, along with tactics that increasingly dismissed mobility and instead stressed concentrations of gunfire. This trend culminated in the First World War, a unique period when firepower technology far exceeded that of transportation, leaving gigantic armies to pummel each other to death or dig into the ground to avoid the carnage.

The defeated major power in the Great War was Germany, which also became the first nation to explore how the new leaps in transportation technology during the 1920s and 30s—motor vehicles (including tanks) on the ground and bombers in the air—could loosen the strictures on warfare and once again allow widespread mobility on the battlefield.

Robert M. Citino of the University of North Texas offers an initial broad-brush definition for German maneuver warfare that provides a good and workable frame of reference for this study. This definition will be modified as required by the adaptation of maneuver warfare by the Marine Corps.

Historian Citino's description is found in his outstanding study titled, aptly enough, *The German Way of War*:

> The Germans called it Bewegungskrieg—the war of movement on the operational level. . . . [I]t meant the maneuver of large units to strike an enemy a sharp, even annihilating blow as rapidly as possible. It could be a surprise assault on an unprotected flank or, better yet, both flanks—or even better than that, his rear. Such a vigorous operational posture implied certain other characteristics . . . an army with an extremely high level of battlefield aggression, an officer corps that tended to launch attacks no matter what the odds, and a flexible system of command.[1]

* * *

The current work focuses on the development of a Marine Corps Way of War (MCWW) both externally and internally from the post-Vietnam period to the present era in southwest Asia. It must be noted that both the U.S. Army as well as the Marine Corps were simultaneously exposed to the efforts of the "Congressional Reformers" from the mid-1970s through to the mid-1980s.[2] The Marine Corps was able to more fully embrace maneuver warfare and its doctrinal philosophy, strategy, and tactics. Thus, this work covers the Marine Corps from the early 1970s through to the 2010s as it wrestled with the implementation of this evolutionary transition. As an aside, it is interesting to note that the U.S. Army is just starting to investigate the potentials of maneuver warfare almost forty years later. At best, the Army's Special Forces' light infantry posture can be considered a type of maneuver warfare element practiced within the U.S. Army.[3]

Maneuver warfare suited the numerically smaller Marine Corps both from an intellectual as well as a practical basis. The Marine Corps has been unique from its beginning due to its small numbers in comparison to the larger U.S.

1 Robert M. Citino, *The German Way of War* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005), xiv.

2 United States Military Academy Seminar Conference XX, June 1982 and follow on Break-Out meetings report summary unauthored, pages 35-81.

3 In the Army's defense, its tardiness in adopting maneuver warfare can be explained in its cautiousness in developing new military trends, coupled with its primary mission during the Cold War of keeping the Warsaw Pact nations from overrunning Western Europe using the defensive-offensive attritional way of war that had in essence won World War II. Add in technological military one-upmanship in battlefield development to counter the superior numbers of the Warsaw Pact, and the U.S. Army did not really have the time or the inclination to change its doctrine, strategy, and tactics to incorporate German-style maneuver warfare during the Cold War period. United States Military Academy Seminar Conference XX, June 1982, General Myers (US Army) closing speech recorded side 14.

Army. One can almost equate it to the armies of the Prussian Frederick the Great, whose small forces found success on the battlefields of Western Europe in similar doctrinal situations facing today's Marine Corps—partly because of its adoption of a philosophy of maneuver warfare. Although the Marine Corps acquitted itself extremely well in the battlespaces of World War I and II, as well as during the Cold War engagements of Korea and Vietnam, it remained mired to a large extent in the traditional American or French option of attritional defensive-offensive warfare. This was very costly in treasure, and, in most instances, resulted in very high casualty rates.[4]

In the years prior to the end of the Cold War, a perceived transformation within the Marine Corps occurred. This transformation has been described by some as a true Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) that set the stage for the current means of prosecuting warfare. In fact, there was no RMA. What took place was the evolution and institutionalization of a philosophical/doctrinal approach that relied on a unique version of modern maneuver warfare. It also incorporated the military philosophy of Col. John R. Boyd (USAF, ret.) and the reliance on the Marine Corps' own former strategies and tactics found in its "Small Wars" DNA.[5]

American history and its foreign relations helped to forge the Marine Corps into a military institution that has the unique characteristic of being the only waterborne fighting force in the American military experience. This can be seen in the very DNA of the Marine Corps from its inception and its concomitant history. In foreign actions, both bellicose and humanitarian, from the American Revolution to its present participation in the Global War on Terror, the Marine Corps has transformed itself into a force-in-readiness capable of employing maneuver-type tactics, casting aside the attritional defensive-offensive way of war.[6]

This transformation did not happen by coincidence or serendipitous encounters. The expeditionary nature of the Marine Corps history, coupled with its participation in every major conflict (and most small ones) has created

4 John A. English and Bruce I. Gudmundsson, *On Infantry,* 2nd ed. (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1994), 63; Russell F. Weigley, *The American Way of War* (Bloomington: Indian University Press, 1973), 199.

5 See *Small Wars Manual*, FMFRP 12-15.

6 It should also be noted that this may not always be the case when joint forces are deployed. Given the opportunity, the Corps itself will utilize what can now be termed a "Marine Corps Way of War."

a unique and agile fighting force as a department within the United States Navy. The Marine Corps Way of War is the product of thoughtful and deliberate development by vibrant, forward-thinking, and forceful Marine Corps leaders. A handful of politicians, other civilians, and non-Marine members of the military had seen in maneuver warfare a solution to the problems endemic in attritional-defensive offensive warfare. Subsequently, the adoption of a "Marine Corps Way of War" has led to the Corps' present success in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

This study refers to a band of these mislabeled "Reformers" both in and outside the Marine Corps in the latter part of the 20th century. It will also focus on the efforts of the recent commandants of the Marine Corps along with certain field grade generals and their subordinates. Along the way, it examines how their leadership and initiatives have affected the Marine Corps over the last 25-plus years, in particular surrounding the adoption of maneuver warfare and its application to a MCWW. Since General Alfred M. Gray Jr. USMC (ret.), follow-on commandants and battlefield commanders have carried this vision and the intent of a MCWW into the future. It is a testament to all the so-called "Reformers" (with "evolutionists" or "maneuverists" being more accurate), whose analysis, timeliness, adaptability, and foresight have added to the battlefield success of our Marine Corps.

General Gray, the 29th Commandant of the Marine Corps, characterized this evolutionary development this way:

> You have to understand Maneuver Warfare is really a thought process. . . . So it was much more of an impact and it is probably not even a good name but that's what we gave it. The point is, it was all about empowering people and letting people do what they think they had to do, letting people make mistakes and so on, so they learn, and that was one of the big leadership parts of the maneuver thought process.
>
> The empowerment of people, and the idea of decentralization, in other words, maybe decentralizing operations so the intent is to understand two echelons up, and two echelons down, that type of thing. So that thought process is very, very important. I think that we in essence turned the Marine Corp loose. So the Marine Corp really did it. I just let them do it.[7]

7 General Alfred M. Gray USMC (ret.), interviews with author, May 20, 2011 - May 2015.

The work of these "Reformers" is evident in the following areas:

1. Educational reforms that broadened the Marines' knowledge base to support a MCWW;
2. The development of political agility within a governmental system that had created a political bureaucracy that tended toward political maneuverings and intrigue;
3. External and internal training designed to place the Marine Corps in the forefront of military action and live up to its reputation of being the "First to Fight";
4. A redefinition of doctrine and philosophy for the Marine Corps that has adopted and redefined maneuver warfare on all levels of battle as it applies to the Marine Corps; and
5. The development of leadership skills to accomplish success in the preceding areas as it applies to a MCWW.

As stated above, this study concentrates on military leadership within the Marine Corps, which has not only withstood the rigors of warfare but also conflict within the U.S. political system. To its credit, the Marine Corps has survived and triumphed in both battlespaces simultaneously.[8]

The Marine Corps, of course, is not an independent branch of service within the Department of Defense, but a department within the U.S. Navy. Because of calculated, wise, and determined leadership—and in some instances outside guidance— the Marine Corps has been able to stand on equal footing with the four other independent military branches (Army, Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard).[9]

This Marine Corps' leadership cadre (the "so-called "Reformers and commandants) is the reason for both internal and external successes. The Corps' leadership has to rely on Congressional efforts to maintain the Marines' *raison d'être*, an amphibious and seaborne provider of power projection or a "Force in Readiness." The Marine Corps must also be able to secure a land position as the logical termination of its line of communications before, during,

8 Martin Binkin and Jeffrey Record, *Where Does the Marine Corps Go from Here* (Washington, D.C: The Brookings Institution, 1976), 66.

9 See Chapter IV of this document for complete discussion of the work of follow-on commandants of the Marine Corps.

and in all cases after military or civil action in order to secure its place in the current United States military environment.

This was amplified by General James Amos, the 35th Commandant of the Marine Corps, in November of 2011 at Camp Lawton, Herat, Afghanistan. While Marines "are willing and able to operate from dug-in positions [attritional defensive-offensive doctrine]," explained General Amos, "they are uniquely equipped and trained to do much more: they can get to any crisis on land, sea, or in the air, on a moment's notice. . . . [Commandant Amos] is eager to see the Iraqi and Afghanistan missions completed so that the Marines can return to their traditional role as expeditionary force in readiness."[10]

Military education is a major part of this evolution into a MCWW. No new doctrine could have taken hold without the presence of militarily educated warriors. In fact, it has become standard practice for all United States Marines to become thinkers and readers.[11]

Required readings encompass the entire Corps, from general officers down to newly minted privates leaving the recruit depots of Parris Island and Camp Pendelton in San Diego. Not only is reading now a fundamental aspect of being a Marine, it is also a socialization process within the Corps itself, for these readings lead to formal and informal discussion groups focusing on various aspects of military history, doctrine, strategy, and tactics. In part, this educational process grew out of the Reformers' ad hoc meetings for the MCWW development in order get its center of gravity embedded within the Marine Corps.[12]

Along with the academic benefits derived from having Marines at all levels become readers, it is important to note that Marines were no longer accepted into the Corps without at least a high school diploma.[13] This benchmark requirement would have a far-reaching and positive spin on the men and women who would become future Marines. This, in conjunction with college-level and post-graduate education and the development of the Marine Corps University program, has greatly benefited the Marine Corps. The internal development and creation of a U.S. Marine puts into the military arena

10 Gen. James Amos, "For Marines Its Back to the Future after Iraq-Afghanistan," *Washington Post*: December 4, 2011.

11 General John Kelly USMC, interview with author, January 23, 2014.

12 Colonel Gary I. Wilson USMC (ret.), interview with author, September 2013.

13 General Alfred M. Gray USMC (ret.), interview with author, May 20, 2011.

a warrior-scholar practitioner of the modern art of maneuver warfare—or a Marine Corps Way of War.

Beginning with Commandant Gray's leadership of the Marine Corps, changes were implemented in how this military organization of seaborne soldiers operated in a post-Cold War world. These changes carried over into the current world in which we are now locked in battle with practitioners of terrorism and irregular warfare (4th/5th Generation Warfare). From the outset, General Gray's objectives were first and foremost meant to take care of his Marines on and off the battlefield. In General Gray's mind, the Corps needed to change how it would do business in this new battlespace. The impetus behind this initiative can be found in the post-Vietnam analysis of the effectiveness of the American campaign in Southeast Asia. Couple this with the bombing of the Marine 24th Amphibious Unit, Battalion Landing Team, HQ Barracks, Beirut, Lebanon in 1983, and it was obvious that serious and immediate battlespace changes needed to be implemented.[14]

The first to voice alarm was Secretary of the Navy (and later senator) Jim Webb, a highly decorated Marine Corps officer who served in Southeast Asia. Vietnam was the proverbial "straw" that finally forced the need to seek change in Marine Corps thinking as it related to doctrine/philosophy, strategy, and tactics. The irregular and attritional action wages against the Marine Corps in Southeast Asia, coupled with the previous heavy battlefield losses of Korea and the Pacific campaigns of World War II, emphasized the heavy human carnage suffered by the Corps in both killed and wounded. The high numbers of killed and wounded were no longer an acceptable price to pay in human assets for the United States in general, and the Marine Corps in particular.[15]

Under General Gray's leadership and direction, the Corps became better able to meet the threats of the 1990s and now the 21st century. The effort was assisted by Bill Lind, Col John Boyd (USAF), and Col. Mike Wyly (USMC),

14 Colonel Thomas X. Hammes USMC (ret.), *The Sling and The* Stone (St. Paul: Zenith Press, 2006), 208. An added note is the refinements of the definition of 4GW into 5GW see also: John Robb, "The Changing Face of War," *Global Guerillas*, October 16, 2006. www.globalguerillas.typepad.com. Accessed September 2013; General Alfred M. Gray USMC (ret.), interview by author; Colonel Michael Wyly USMC (ret.), interview by author, August 20, 2012. This was also supported by Colonel Gary I. Wilson USMC (ret.), interview, September 2013.

15 Colonel Timothy J. Geraghty USMC (ret.), *Peacekeepers at War* (Dulles: Potomac Press, 2009), 131. See comparison chart of KIA and WIA regarding Army and Marine Corps from World War I through OIF and OEF elsewhere in this study.

as well as many others who were involved in dealing with the Congressional Military Reform Caucus in the early 1980s.[16]

Still, the question remains: Is the Marine Corps in a better position today for success in the battlespace as compared to Beirut, Vietnam, Korea, World War II, and World War I because of the evolution toward maneuver warfare that became the doctrine, strategy, and tactics of a Marine Corps Way of War?

While the complexion of warfare and its complementary carnage had been part of the storied history of the Marine Corps, it would not willingly be part of its future if a MCWW was to be successfully implemented.[17] Does the Marine Corps Way of War provide the Corps with the ability to instill into its warriors the means necessary to fight smarter and meets it objectives while simultaneously losing fewer Marines—and yet still fight and achieve the same ideals all Marines had fought for since their inception in 1776? The answer to this question comprises much of the thrust of this work.

The concept of Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) serves as a broad-brush description for this evolution, although the Marine Corps on the whole does not accept the "Revolution" wording. As Col. Pat Garvey stated, "The Marine Corps has 'evolved' into a MCWW." On the surface, this evolution focused on maneuver warfare as developed by the German army during the inter-war years of the 1920s and 1930s. This fine point of word craft is elemental to understanding both the Marine Corps and those whose efforts led to bringing the Corps into its future, with the implementation of its own Marine Corps– centric variant of maneuver warfare.[18]

Referring again to the DNA of the Marine Corps' long history, the role of "small wars" and their prosecution by the Corps brings the concepts of maneuver warfare full circle to the current conditions of irregular warfare in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Keeping this in mind, changes that may appear minor are, for the most part, major paradigm shifts within such an iconoclastic

16 See Wyly's Wheel Diagram at the end of this work. There was an inner guiding group run by Bill Lind and Pat Garvey using the same name (Congressional Military Reform Caucus).

17 Colonel Michael Wyly USMC (ret.), interview with author, August 20, 2012. This was also supported by Colonel Gary I. Wilson USMC (ret.), interview, September 2013 and Mr. William (Bill) Lind in personal interview, February 10, 2012.

18 Colonel Patrick Garvey USMCR (ret.) supported by personal interviews with General James Conway USMC, 34th CMC, and Generals James Mattis USMC (ret.), and John Kelly USMC CG SOCOM; Michael B. Barrett, *Prelude to Blitzkrieg* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 2013), 308-309; Wyly, interview by the author, August 20, 2012.

and ethos-bound institution such as the Marine Corps in the post-World War II environment.[19]

The Cold War world changed the stakes but not the methodologies of warfare. For the most part, ground warfare was limited to surrogates; the Corps' mindset was still attritional and focused on defensive-offensive actions. In the face of large actions versus small military responses to irregular warfare within these larger military campaigns, changes were clearly needed.[20]

Of the almost 200 "small" military actions in which the United States has participated during the course of its history, the Marine Corps has been the primary American military arm in more than 170 of them (or 85% of all of America's overseas deployments). From aggressive military actions to peacekeeping, from military stabilization to humanitarian assistance, the Marine Corps "Force in Readiness" has excelled in these areas time and again. This was the impetus reflected in moving away from the attritional mindset that held sway from World War I to Gulf War I. This move away from the attritional side of battle was to be the frame of reference for the adoption of maneuver warfare as proffered by the "Reformer/Evolutionists" or "Maneuverists." It was officially implemented and institutionalized by the Corps in 1987.[21]

Prior to Gulf War I, the rescue of Americans in Grenada and the invasion of Panama were two major actions in which the Marine Corps began to integrate maneuver warfare tenets. *Operation Just Cause*, the Panama campaign in December 1989, may have been the last invasion of the attritional type, or the second real opportunity to insert some of the lessons of maneuver warfare into practice on a limited basis. *Operation Urgent Fury* in Grenada in October 1983 utilized some pre-institutionalized concepts of maneuver warfare early in the Marine Corps' move into its' future warfighting paradigm.[22]

19 interview with General James Conway USMC: 34th CMC. Gen. Conway also referred to FMFRP: 12-15, *Small Wars Manual* 1940 (Reprinted: December 1990 by Major General M. Caulfield, under the direction of the 29th CMC, General A. Gray).

20 Wyly, interview with the author; Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone,* 215-219.

21 Max Boot, *Savage Wars of Peace* (New York: Perseus Books, 2002). All "Small Wars" were counted and either assigned to the U.S. Army or the Marine Corps. Averages were run to get the above statistical data; Marine Corps, *Warfighting,* Fleet Marine Force Manual 1(FMFM 1) PCN 139 000050 00, March 6, 1989.

22 Lieutenant Colonel Nicholas E. Reynolds, USMCR, *Just Cause: Marine Operations in Panama, 1988–1990* (Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, HQ USMC, PCN 190 003134 00, 1996), 15-23; Major General Raymond Smith, USMC (ret.), telephone interview with the author, December 2013.

Prior to his becoming the 29th Commandant, General Al Gray was a key part of the vanguard who accepted the move to incorporate the lessons of Fredrick the Great, Napoléon, von Clausewitz, von Manstein, and the German school of military strategy that developed during the inter-war period of the 1920s and 1930s.[23] Future Commandant Gray should be considered one of the prime movers, and perhaps *the* prime mover, of these "Reformers." Gray embarked unofficially on this warfighting "evolution" during Vietnam, and then officially a short time after the 1983 Beirut bombing that took the lives of 238 Marines.

Other non-Marine practitioners of this way of thinking volunteered or were recruited to help make this evolution become reality for the Marine Corps. In particular, William (Bill) Lind and Col. John R. Boyd, USAF (ret) were two of the non-Marine maneuver warfare proponents tasked with this evolution as it transformed into doctrine for the Marine Corps.[24]

The "Reformers" also saw that the lessons of Sun Tzu, introduced by both Colonel Boyd and General Gray, and other Asian military strategists were implemented as a way of supporting and enhancing these aspects of a Marine Corps Way of War. Asian war philosophy had permeated the past history of the Marine Corps in the form of the World War II usage of "Gung Ho" as a unifying unofficial motto for "Can Do." It is similar to the more modern Marine Corps aphorism of "Improvise, Adapt, and Overcome." General James L. Jones (USMC, ret.) incorporated the Asian hand-to-hand combat school during his commandancy, further embedding Asian warfare attributes for all Marines in this evolution.[25]

The areas in which specific and significant change for the Marine Corps can be noted are as follows:

1. Doctrine/Philosophy, Strategy, and Tactics;
2. Command and Control;

23 Colonel Wyly, interview with the author. This is also supported by the Lind interview.

24 Robert Coram, *Boyd: The Fighter Pilot Who Changed The Art of War* (Boston: Little Brown, 2002), 395.

25 Wyly and Gray interviews reflect that Colonel Boyd spoke to General Gray on numerous occasions. Boyd stated: "As this maneuver warfare doctrine is the beginning point, not the end piece of the operational art of fighting."; Ming L. Pei, "Gung Ho, China Page (1995), www.chinapage.com/word/gungho.html, accessed April 16, 2014; Marine Corps, *Close Combat,* (MCRP3-02B and MCCCTP), February 12, 1999.

3. Training and Education;
4. Leadership and Style of Leadership;
5. Operations.[26]

These five major areas are influenced by manipulation via the forces of bureaucracy and politics within both the Marine Corps and Congress. There is also internal jockeying within the Defense Department and, in a macro sense, the ongoing war efforts in the Middle East (Southwest Asia) that affect the Marine Corps today because of the inception of maneuver warfare.

The MCWW's maneuver warfare and its legacy has positioned the Corps and its warriors/scholars into the future as the nation's "Force in Readiness" worldwide. No other branch of service in the United States can make that claim. More than lip service has been paid to a transition to Boyd's maneuver warfare and the advantages derived from this type of thought and engagement by a small amphibious fighting force. The MCWW's redefinition of doctrinal philosophy, strategy, and tactics that has adopted, defined, and redefined maneuver warfare on all levels are evident in the Corps' battle posture today.

In retrospect, the success of the German Army of the late 1930s and early 1940s, as it rolled up victory upon victory, is the general backdrop for this evolution of the Marine Corps. It is not, however, the end-point for Marine Corps philosophy. The convergence of thought on maneuver warfare and combined arms are coupled with the fact that the Marines' leadership cadre became one of its strongest proponents in opening up the future to fighting better, more economically, and smarter. This would not to be an easy adaptation within the Corps for numerous reasons, the strongest external perception being "that this was not the way that the Marine Corps had fought in the past." The Marine Corps' DNA, though, offers a very strong counter-indication to this perception.[27]

After the 1989 invasion of Panama, the second major military action during General Gray's commandancy took the Marine Corps to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Iraq. The Marines were responsible for liberating Kuwait during the First Gulf War (or *Operation Desert Storm*) in 1990-91. Its role in this

26 Marine Corps, *Marine Corps Operations,* (MCDP 1-0), September 27, 2001.

27 Wyly and Gray interviews with the author; General Mattis and General Kelly, in-person interviews with the author. This is also supported by email correspondence with Lt. General Bernard Trainor USMC (ret.), dated September 16, 2012.

action was based on the primary use of the Marine Corps concepts of a maneuver warfare philosophy developed prior to, and refined during, this period in the Amphibious Warfighting School by Colonel Mike Wyly and Colonel Boyd. In developing plans for this offensive, the traditional form of attritional warfare was not used.[28]

As attrition warfare was being superseded during the late 1980s by the Corps' development of maneuver warfare, there was much discussion within the Corps as to what actually constituted the doctrine. Maneuver warfare and its follow-on philosophical characteristics, for example, included attacking weak points with strength, reconnaissance pulls, a high tempo of operations, and decentralized control with the object of shattering the enemy's cohesion, organization, command, and psychological balance. Further, MCWW's maneuver warfare required a higher level of military judgment and was much riskier than attrition warfare. In the course of developing plans for this offensive posture, the Corps' leadership sought to shorten its own force's cycle of observation, orientation, decision, and action (also known as the "OODA Loop" of then-Captain John Boyd), to one that was faster than that of the Iraqi Army during Desert Storm, thus giving the decided advantage to the Marine Corps.[29]

The decision-making vehicle for this was intelligence preparation of the battlefield along the lines of Boyd's *Patterns of Conflict*. This system and doctrine provided an easily grasped series of milestone decisions as the battle progressed. In addition, the Marine Corps' strategy planners, under the able leadership of Lt. General Walt Boomer, wanted to deceive and confound the enemy's command and control system so the Iraqis would not be able to form an accurate picture of what was happening on the battlefield, and therefore would not be able to respond effectively to Marine Corps actions. Both Generals Bill Keyes (II MEF) and Mike Myatt (I MEF), by assaulting the Iraqi forces at their weakest points, hoped to minimize their own casualties and avoid the possibility of chemical weapons being used against them. In the best example of lessons learned from a maneuver warfare philosophy, The Marine

28 Coram, "*Boyd,*" 422-426; William S, Lind, *Maneuver Warfare Handbook* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985), 7. Attritional warfare's other features included pitting strength against strength, massed and accurate fires, ponderous movement, and centralized control with an emphasis on procedures.

29 Lind, "*Maneuver Warfare,*" 49; See OODA Loop Cycling Chart page 257.

Corps would fight quickly and violently while maintaining a rapid tempo of movement.[30]

Was this going to be the future of the Marine Corps Way of War? In the main, the MCWW's maneuver warfare suited the Corps' ethos on and off the battlefield. As the "maneuverists" anticipated, this evolution into maneuver warfare would take the terrible sting of attritional warfare's human carnage out of the Marine Corps DNA, while still keeping the ethic and ethos of the Marine Corps' fierce fighters in its hallowed place. *Semper Fidelis* had added a new wrinkle to its meaning. As it fought in support of the U.S. Army and other coalition forces to liberate Kuwait, the Marine Corps Way of War pushed itself into greater awareness because of it shortened the overall mission by two and a half days while successfully meeting mission objectives.[31]

The seeds of this development can be found in six different settings that eventually united in this evolutionary effort. The perceived "Revolution in Military Affairs" (RMA) within the Marine Corps did not take place because, simply put, it had always existed within the Corps. The reasons for each independent evolutionary development will be further discussed in depth and will provide new primary source information based upon interviews with each developer. To further set the frame of reference, it must be noted that non-Marine Corps sources for the use of maneuver warfare grew out of the political need to fund the military in general. And the other of these aspects was the follow-on of downsizing the Marine Corps in the negatively charged post-Vietnam economic, political, and social environment.[32]

William (Bill) Lind should be credited with initially bringing the modern German Way of Warfare into the equation as a non-military subject matter expert (SME). Lind, an academic with impressive Ivy League credentials in European history, joined Senator Bob Taft's staff in 1973 and proceeded to enmesh Senator Taft (and later Senator Gary Hart) in military affairs.

30 Colonel John Boyd USAF (ret.), "*Patterns of Conflict*" (unpublished lecture, notes and slides: January 1980), 88; Major General Mike Myatt and Lt. Gen Bill Keys, personal and telephone interviews with the author, September and December 2013; Keyes and Myatt, interviews with the author.

31 See comparison chart of KIA and WIA page XX; Michael R. Gordon, Lt. General Bernard Trainor, *The General's War* (Boston: Little Brown, 1995), 374.

32 Walter Isaacson; et al.," The Winds of Change," *Time Magazine,* March 7, 1983, cover page story. www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,953733,00.html, accessed April 10, 2011.

According to Lind, "The economics of downsizing would not weaken the overall military strength of the country if maneuver warfare were to be adopted." It is here Lind begins his often aggressive push for this change.[33]

At the same time Lind established himself in the fight to cut military spending without weakening America's military abilities, Jeffery Record and Martin Binkin published the Brookings Institute's *Where Does the Marine Corps Go from Here: Studies in Defense Policy Report* (1976). As strange as it may sound to many people today, the study was less than hopeful for keeping a Marine Corps in America's future. Jeffery Record, along with Bill Lind, later became Senator Sam Nunn's military staffers. At this juncture Record was a strong advocate of maneuver warfare.[34]

Colonel John Boyd's long history of questioning U.S. Air Force military and spending practices came to the forefront of the economic-military debate in 1980. This debate played into the general scenario as the means necessary to affect a complete overhaul within the Department of Defense beginning with fiscal responsibility and new weapons' purchases. Boyd had advanced his evolutionary OODA Loop logic and warfighting philosophy into his 14-hour lecture called *Patterns of Conflict* that was steeped in maneuver warfare with added emphasis on the Asian philosophy of Sun Tzu. Although the U.S. Army did not acknowledge maneuver warfare, there were a small number of "Reformers" trying to advocate for Army regeneration in this venue. Among them were Steven Canby (U.S. Army and West Point graduate), his civilian partner Ed Litwak, and their consultant/military historian from Israel, Martin van Creveld. Colonel Huba Wass de Czege (U.S. Army and West Point graduate) was also an advocate from within the Army War College. Maneuver warfare did not take hold within the U.S. Army at this time. The Army did, however, foster parts of this thinking at the Army Ranger School in Fort Bragg, NC.[35]

Internally, the Marine Corps completed this circle of prime movers when Bill Lind introduced John Boyd to Col. Mike Wyly. After his two tours of duty in Vietnam, Colonel Wyly knew that regardless of the reports, the Marine

33 Lind, interview with the author.

34 Binkin and Record, *Where Does the Marine Corps Go from Here*, 1-3; This was confirmed in my interviews with both Col. Garvey and Mr. Bill Lind.

35 Boyd, "*Patterns of Conflict,*"16. This is also addressed by Wyly and GI Wilson in their interviews; Garvey and Wyly, interviews with the author.

Corps was in dire need of new doctrine, new strategy, and new tactics. He dedicated his career to finding a better way for the Marine Corps to fight and win on its future battlefields.

This center of gravity for Marine Corps maneuver warfare also included other key Marines who fostered this effort before the entry of the commandant's cadre and its future acceptance as Marine Corps Doctrine. These men include Marines Major General Bernard Trainor, Navy Secretary Jim Webb, and Col. Patrick Garvey (USMC Res.), the New York State liaison for military matters to Congress. In 1982, the issues concerning maneuver warfare were moving down the path that now included the Congressional Military Reform Caucus, which hosted a three-day conference at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. It was at Senior Conference XX, a three-day review and discussion on maneuver warfare by all those previously mentioned, that maneuver warfare found its initial place within the Marine Corps.[36]

Surprisingly little has been written on the history of maneuver warfare and its adoption by the Marine Corps into its own unique way of waging war. The bits and pieces that are written have either looked at the success of maneuver warfare as practiced in Gulf War I by Generals Boomer, Keyes, and Myatt, or some academic works on the overall education of Marines.

Furthermore, there are virtually no official records for its adoption by the U.S. Army to date. The Army has gone in the traditional mode of Air-Land-Battle systems that concentrate on a preset bombing component with mass force projection of superior numbers and a linear attritional offensive-defensive doctrine. The Army opted for Netcentrics capabilities overlaid on the Cold War model in lieu of maneuver warfare.[37]

The chapters that follow build on one another and together help explain the development of a specific and institutionalized Marine Corps Way of War—a unique application of maneuver warfare and other pertinent philosophical thoughts that make the Marine Corps' warfighting applications uniquely its own doctrinal/ philosophical, strategic, and tactical variant in the operational art of war.

36 Lind and Wyly, interviews with the author; USMA Senior Conference XX, 70.

37 John S. Brown, *Kevlar Legions: The Transformation of the US Army, 1989-2005* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 2011), 35.

Chapter 2

Belleau Wood to Beirut

From World War I to the latter part of the 20th century, the Marine Corps was involved in fifteen engagements on two military levels: four major national warfare initiatives and eleven minor or "Small War" deployments. The four major involvements included World War I, World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. The eleven "Small War" actions during this period took place in Nicaragua, Honduras, Cuba, Mexico, Haiti, China, the Dominican Republic, Panama, Iran, Grenada, and Lebanon.[1]

The traditional American Way of War (offensive-defensive methodology of warfare with synchronization as practiced by the Napoleonic French) was the national doctrine, strategy, and tactics employed in all of these involvements. Arguably, some exceptions can be noted in the "Small Wars" category as codified in the Marine Corps publication *Small Wars Manual*, 1940.[2] However, these did not play a major role in how America in general or the Corps in particular went about the business of warfare. It did, however, set the stage beginning in the early 1980s for the Marine Corps' future evolution

1 Colonel Jon T. Hoffman, *USMC: A Complete History* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 2002), 114-243.

2 F. G. Hoffman, *Decisive Force: The New American Way of War* (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1996), 9-10; *Small Wars Manual*, FMFRP 12-15.

into a variant of maneuver warfare philosophy. What is of importance for this work is the frame of reference for what originally developed into an accepted American Way of War.

The setting for the prosecution of war by the United States during this period effectively validated the efforts of General Ulysses S. Grant in successfully bringing the Civil War to a close. Grant and many of his fellow officers were influenced by what they learned as cadets at West Point. There, they became steeped in the lessons of Antoine-Henri, Baron Jomini, a Swiss officer who served as a general in the French army (and later for the Russians). Jomini was one of the most celebrated writers on the Napoleonic art of war. According to historian Russell F. Weigley, Jomini's basic tenant of strategy could be boiled down to "the necessity to bring the maximum possible force to bear against the decisive point in the theater of operations while the enemy can muster only an inferior part of his strength there. To be able to bring superior [strength] against inferior strength [weakness]," continued Weigley, "depends upon the proper ordering of one's lines of communication in relation to the enemy's."[3]

The tenets associated with Napoleonic warfare had considerable gravitas during this period. Napoleon had lost only two battles while winning nearly 50, and so was perceived as a model for emulation. Still, General Grant was not completely committed to this common line of military thought as it applied to his experiences during the Civil War.[4] A number of factors eventually shaped Grant's strategy and tactics that ultimately led to victory. This shaping planted the seeds of an American Way of War that, in some regards, still prevails today.

In preparing for the eventual defeat of the Confederacy, General Grant moved away from the concentration of winning battles. His strategy centered on what it would take in the long view to achieve a complete victory. As a result, he settled upon a strategy of annihilation based upon the principle of concentration of mass. Grant set out to find and strike the main Confederate armies with the concentrated thrust of massive Federal forces until the enemy was beaten into impotence and could no longer fight back. The "offensive" became everything for the Union armies under the leadership of Grant, regardless of whether they won or lost each individual battle. He understood

3 Gunther E. Rothenberg, *Art of Warfare in the Age of Napoleon* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1978), 243.

4 Weigley, *American Way of War*, 83.

where so many others did not the attritional disadvantage under which the Confederacy labored. As a result he moved on several fronts at once—in central Virginia against General Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, in the Shenandoah Valley and below Petersburg, and in north Georgia—splitting apart the territorial Confederate battlefield. With assets beyond those of his enemies, Grant proceeded to engage them on his own terms. He pursued a relentless and ruthless up-tempo warfare, one the Confederacy was unable to disengage from to regroup and reorganize. Winning in the long run was his only purpose, so short term tactical losses were of little consequence.[5]

Grant extended this concept until the "battle" became synonymous with the whole campaign. On his own front he determined to fight General Lee at all times, and every day if possible, in order to keep the Confederate army within his own army's iron grip. This made it much more difficult for the Confederates to employ deceptive maneuvers or diversionary raids. His own superior resources permitted Federal armies everywhere to drive ahead, engage, and continue driving until key logistical centers fell and the enemy armies eventually disintegrated. Carnage on the battlefield was an acceptable price to pay so long as the enemy was still able to fight or even offer resistance. Grant could feed and clothe his armies and replenish his ranks to a degree the South could not even begin to realize. The Confederacy won some battles during Grant's tenure as general-in-chief, but being forced to fight one engagement after another guaranteed they would lose the war via simple attrition.[6]

General Grant added a second dimension to his warfare by intentionally seeking the destruction of the Confederacy's means of supplying their war effort. The enemy's food and economic resources were treated as prime military targets. Across the South, the home front was exposed to the many of the same ravages of war as the front lines. While Grant pressed Lee, Generals Phil Sheridan and William T. Sherman set out to destroy the lifeblood of the Confederacy by burning crops, destroying granaries, and crushing the morale of the armies in the field, which in turn convinced many on the home front to plead for their men at the front to come home. Grant now became the prophet of a strategy of annihilation in new dimensions, seeking the destruction of the

5 Edward Hagerman, *The American Civil War and the Origins of Modern Warfare: Idea, Organization and Field Command* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1992), 244.

6 Weigley, *American Way of War*, 142- 143, 194.

enemy's armies, their means of logistical supply, and the psychological denigration of their non-combatant people as the means to an undeniable victory—in short, a strategy approaching something closer to "total war" against his Rebel opponents.[7]

Finally, the dynamics of war had been altered by a number of technological and industrial advances. The telegraph, advances in weapons' production and the refinement of explosives, the use of railroads, steamships, and submarines all added to the complexities of warfare on every level. Of all the major Civil War commanders, Grant was foremost in launching joint operations with the U.S. Navy, with which he achieved battles of annihilation at Fort Donelson and Vicksburg before he was promoted and shipped east, where he assumed command in the field with the Army of the Potomac. The influence of technological advancements was a critical turning point in the evolution of warfare and its corresponding trinity of Grant's doctrine, strategy, and tactics.

The United States entered the 20th century as a budding world power. Its military had been shaped by the final battlefield successes against the Confederacy, in the west during the Indian Wars, and finally by the short but sharp turn-of-the-century war with Spain. The legacy of General Grant continued to shape the American Way of War, now a model for an attritional, offensive-defensive concentration of force-on-force seeking complete annihilation in an unrelenting manner regardless of the cost in blood and treasure. This was intended to take place in a sphere extending to all aspects of the home front. This, then, was the modus operandi the American military carried to Europe when it entered World War I.

Marine Corps, 1918

World War I provided the venue for the Marine Corps to enter into the larger picture of warfare to be played out in the 20th century. It provided the Corps with the opportunity to live up to its raison d'etre as an expeditionary fighting force, for the "soldiers of the sea" were to become the equals of the U.S. Army in all aspects during World War I. The sole exception was the size

7 Hagerman, *The American Civil War,* 275-289. Along with these tenets of warfare was the acceptance of large numbers of killed in action (KIA) and wounded in action (WIA). This annihilational approach was further employed in America's Indian Wars of the last half of the 1800s with the same devastating effects evidenced during the final days of the Civil War.

of the Marine Corps and the number of Marines sent to Europe. Of special note is the fact that this inter-service equality extended into the doctrine, strategy, and tactics of the way American warfare was conducted at this time.[8]

Jomini's principles of "lines of communication," coupled with the impact of General Grant's indelible marks in this methodology of warfare, were reinforced by the seminal works of Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan: *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783* (1890); *The Influence of Sea Power upon the French Revolution and Empire, 1793-1812* (1892); and *Sea Power in Its Relation to the War of 1812* (1905). The primary focus of Mahan's trilogy further supported the doctrine, strategy, and tactics of concentration of force upon force. It meant unrelenting and dogged effort, which could only be achieved by an offensive force seeking the annihilation of the enemy in total attritional, economic, and psychological war. Like Grant during the last year of the Civil War, the American military was willing to exchange high losses of men and material for victory. Although Mahan's doctrine was directed at naval warfare, its universal truths were the same as those of land warfare in all its Jominian- and Grant-type aspects. This American Way of Warfare pervaded the national character and was exemplified on the battlefields where the Marine Corps fought during World War I.[9]

The Marine Corps more than distinguished itself at Chateau-Thierry, Belleau Wood, Saint-Mihiel, Blanc Mont, Saint-Etienne, and Meuse-Argonne. In all of these battles the national military psyche pervading warfare at the time was in evidence in how the Marine Corps fought. Belleau Wood offers a prime example of these principles. In an offensive action designed to uproot German forces, the Marines stepped off seeking to annihilate, at all costs, an enemy in a well-protected defensive position. Further, this force-on-force concentration, in the best tradition of Grant's military philosophy, achieved its end through unrelenting, persistent, and tenacious fighting—focused intensive bloody warfare almost to a fault.

On the attack with bayonets fixed, facing artillery, snipers, and automatic machine guns, the 5th and 6th Marines did not stop fighting until the battle was

8 Major General John A. Lejeune, *The Reminiscences of a Marine* (Philadelphia: Dorrance Publishers, 1930), 273.

9 Weigley, *American Way of War*,173-174. This is supported by Captain A. T. Mahan, *Naval Strategy: Compared and Contrasted with the Principles and Practices of Military Operations on Land* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1911), 17; Mahan, *Naval Strategy*, 46-47.

won. The cost at Belleau Wood came at the cost of 1,750 killed (or 71% of all KIA's for the Marine Corps during all of World War I) and 3,450 wounded (or 39% of all WIA's during the war), for a total cost of 5,200 Marines. An urgent message sent by a Marine lieutenant captured the price of this American Way of War for the Marine Corps at Belleau Wood. "I have only two men out of my company and 20 out of some other company," wrote 2nd Lieutenant Clifton B. Cates, 96th Co. U.S. 2nd Division (Regular) at 10:45 a.m. on July 191, 1918. "We need support, but it is almost suicide to try to get it here as we are swept by machine gun fire and a constant barrage is on us. I have no one on my left and only a few on my right. I will hold."[10]

Ultimately Belleau Wood was a tactical victory, but the costs incurred were extremely high. Although no one knew it, the die was cast and the tone set for the Marine Corps and its future of warfighting operations up to and including the Vietnam War.

Marine Corps, 1941

World War II provided a similar backdrop for the Marine Corps, one in which the tried and true Grant trinity of doctrine, strategy, and tactics held sway. The "offensive," according to historian Maurice Matloff, was still paramount. The doctrine of Jomini, Mahan, Grant, and General Pershing's protégés (who were now running the American military) had not changed one iota in theory. Instead, it was enhanced by further technological advances in the form of airpower, the tank and other armored mechanized vehicles, support technology, communications, and vast industrial complexes affecting every aspect of warfare. Airpower, as applied to warfighting of the time, significantly enhanced the doctrine of total war, except this time from bombers and fighter planes capable of destroying the enemy's means of production, morale, and its noncombatant citizenry. Its use continued on a grand scale where Sherman and Sheridan had left off. Bomber chiefs and theorists such as Douhet, Hart, Mitchell, Goering, and Arnold fought their aspect of total war on the social, economic, and industrial fronts. Airpower also played an ancillary role in the area of combined arms as applied to the battlefield. Close-air support for

10 Alan Axelrod, *Miracle at Belleau Wood: The Birth of the Modern Marine Corps* (Guilford: Lyons Press, 2007), 221-222; See KIA-WIA Comparison Chart at end of this chapter; Edward H. Simmons, *The United States Marines: A History* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2003), 102.

infantry and the new modern cavalry—tanks and other armored vehicles—enhanced and extended the "offensive" in its quest for rapid and unconditional victory.[11]

The inter-war years found the Marine Corps preparing for its role as an expeditionary and amphibious fighting force in the Pacific theater. The disastrous experiences of the British at Gallipoli in 1915-1916 were carefully studied, and new tactics developed to insure that beach invasions in the Pacific against the Japanese would not turn into an American Gallipoli.[12]

To further advance the Marine Corps' seaborne capability, a suitable landing craft had to be developed to get Marines onto the islands to be invaded. This important issue was solved through the efforts of then-Lieutenant Victor Krulak. While stationed in China during the Japanese invasion that began in 1937, the young lieutenant observed the innovations of Japanese landing craft. Their designs and structure afforded the Japanese vessels the ease of getting to the beach and easily disembarking forces and equipment in a more utilitarian way than previous methods. Krulak carried these designs back home with him, and, in conjunction with Andrew Higgins of the Higgins Boat Company of Louisiana, developed the "Higgins boat"—the Marine Corps' "bridge to the beach."[13]

With the U.S. Army in World War II focused primarily on defeating the Germans and Italians in the European Theater of Operations, the Marine Corps was given the opportunity to conduct the major effort of defeating the Japanese in the sea-land-air war conducted across the vast Pacific Theater. Nothing had changed in respect to the dictums of General Grant for the American military in general, and the Marine Corps in particular. The trinity of American doctrine, strategy, and tactics for the Corps can be best expressed by a quote from Lieutenant General H. M. "Howlin' Mad" Smith, commander of the Marines on Iwo Jima: "Since I first joined the Marines, I have advocated aggressiveness in the field and constant offensive action. Hit quickly, hit hard and keep right

11 Maurice Matloff, "The American Approach to War," in *The Theory and Practice of War,* ed. Michael Howard (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1965), 240; John Shy, "Jomini" in *Makers of Modern Strategy: from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age,* Peter Paret, ed., (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 182, 183.

12 Robert Coram, *Brute: The Life of Victor Krulak, U.S. Marine* (New York: Little and Brown, 2010), 67.

13 Coram, *Brute*, 103, 60-103.

on hitting. Give the enemy no rest, no opportunity to consolidate his forces and hit back at you."[14]

The Marine Corps' war in the Pacific on tiny islands no one had ever heard of would be just like Belleau Wood in terms of their cost in blood. These battles would also mark watershed events in the history of the Corps' fighting ethos and the American Way of War. Guadalcanal, Makin Island, Mananikau, New Georgia, Bougainville, Cape Gloucester, Tarawa, the Marshalls, Eniwetok, the Marianas, Guam, Saipan, Tinian, Peleliu, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa provided the beaches that saw the Marines leave the sea and fight the American Way of War in a brutal island-hopping campaign. As the Marines honed their tactics throughout the conflict, so too did the tenacious Japanese defenders, who extracted costs that were consistently high. For example, the cost for the Corps at Iwo Jima involved 5,931 killed (or 8% of the 71,245 Marines who had gone ashore), as well as 17,372 wounded (24% of the total). All told, of the 485,053 Marines deployed in combat during World War II, 86,940—or 18%—were either killed or wounded (19,733 killed and 67,207 wounded). Once again the cost in blood for the Corps was high compared to the other service branches.[15]

Marine Corps, 1950

The war in the Pacific Theater during World War II witnessed a strategic change that carried over to the Cold War Korean conflict. Under the leadership of General Douglas MacArthur, contact with the enemy was not as encompassing as that experienced in the European Theater. Given the option to choose his battlefields, MacArthur bypassed numerous enemy strongholds to take the war effort directly to the Japanese mainland as soon as possible.

This type of strategic maneuvering came into play again in the Korean War. The amphibious landing at Inchon on September 15, 1950 bypassed the underestimated North Korean forces that had gained the upper hand in the initial fighting for the southern Korean peninsula. Prior to Inchon, the U.S. Army had been pushed back to Pusan at the southern tip of the peninsula. The 5th Marines were originally sent in to hold a defensive line. Instead, these Marines heeded the words of General Oliver P. Smith and went on the attack,

14 Holland M. Smith, *Coral and Brass* (New York: Scribner, 1949), 49.

15 Simmons, *The United States Marines,* 177. Also see KIA / WIA comparison chart at the end of this chapter.

regaining territory the Army had recently yielded to the North Koreans. Once in motion, the American Way of War took hold and the Marines led the way. After the amphibious landings at Inchon, west of Seoul, the Marines continued on the offensive, driving deep into northern Korea. MacArthur, however, misjudged China's willingness to enter the war and the Marines suddenly found themselves assailed by a surprise Chinese counter-offensive. Completely surrounded and fighting under extreme weather conditions, the Marines brought out their wounded, most of their dead, and nearly all of their weapons and equipment. Along the way they inflicted at least 37,500 casualties on the Chinese Red Army while suffering 4,418 casualties themselves as they reversed direction and fought their way back to the coast. "[The Marines] for their actions during the breakout, and the survivors of that battle, the "Chosin Few," wrote historian Robert Coram, "stand with those Marines who fought at the 'Canal and at Belleau Wood."[16]

The tenacity of those "Chosin Few" was matched only by their ability to carry the tenets of Ulysses S. Grant to another enemy with unlimited human assets, and willing to die for a geopolitical belief. The Marine Corps would give them the opportunity to die in battle at Pusan, Inchon, Seoul, Wonsan, the Chosin Reservoir, Hagaru-ri, and from Yudam to Hungnam. Of the 74,279 Marines deployed during the Korean War, 26,043 (or 35%) were KIA or WIA. Once more, the cost in blood for the Marine Corps was high when compared to the other services branches.[17]

Marine Corps, 1962

The use of military force underwent considerable scrutiny during the Cold War period. Fears of nuclear Armageddon, dubbed Mutually Assured Destruction or MAD, coupled with the proliferation of nuclear devices and their possible deployment, changed the stakes of conventional warfare at the doctrinal level. The strategies of deterrence, coupled with limited warfare and the use of surrogates fighting in the name of the superpowers, did not alter the actual battlefields per se. Vietnam was in some respects a continuation of the Korean War. The defeat of the French at the hands of Viet Minh forces at Dien Bien Phu in November 1953 brought into question the validity of conventional

16 Coram, *Brute*, 212.

17 Ibid., 210.

warfare in this high-stakes game of geopolitics halfway around the world. Limited war and a flexible response was adopted as the strategy of the West to stem the militaristic growth and spread of Communism.[18]

Although the Marine Corps was still guided for the most part in Vietnam by the tenets of an attritional American Way of War, the Corps also revisited its own storied past of small war strategies and tactics. All-out Marine Corps warfare was an attritional, offensive-defensive concentration of force-on-force, and it still sought complete annihilation in an unrelenting manner on the battlefields of South Vietnam. However, this was not the initial Marine Corps' choice of strategy and tactics in this battlespace. The U.S. Army was looking in other directions. To temper these aspects of an American Way of War, Joint Chiefs Chairman General Maxwell Taylor incorporated "an enhanced readiness to fight limited wars and a . . . strategy of flexible response."[19]

The Marine Corps also adopted these aspects of Cold War warfare. Initially, their entry into Vietnam was designed to stop the guerrilla warfare being conducted by the Communists in South Vietnam. The Marine Corps' "flexible response" came in the form of advisors and the Combined Action Program squads inserted into a significant number of villages, eventually reaching 90 Civil Action Program (CAP) units.[20]

Lieutenant General Victor Krulak (the same Krulak who as a young lieutenant had adopted the Japanese landing craft designs) viewed the Viet Cong insurgent forces as North Vietnam's operational center of gravity. He identified South Vietnamese support of the irregular Communists forces as the critical vulnerability to be attacked by the Marine Corps. Accordingly, Krulak focused on small-unit pacification efforts in the villages, believing that only the people of South Vietnam themselves could truly expel the Communists and eliminate the long-term threat. To foster this strategy Krulak established Counter Guerrilla–Counter Insurgency (CGCI) Schools at Camp Pendelton and in Okinawa. The celebrated and highly successful CAP program was a product of this approach—an outgrowth of the Marine Corps' DNA in

18 Morton H. Halperin, *Limited War in the Nuclear Age* (New York: John Wyly & Sons, 1966), 122-124.

19 Weigley, *American Way of War* 420.

20 F. J. "Bing" West, *The Village* (New York: Bantam edition, 1992), xi. See also Maj Norman L. Cooling, "Winning a Battle While Losing a War," *Marine Corps Gazette,* July 2001 https://www.mca-marines.org/gazette/hue-city-1968, accessed May 5, 2013.

prosecuting the "Small Wars" strategy first learned in the Caribbean, China, and Central America.[21]

These schools acclimated Marines to the "boots on the ground" conditions they would encounter once deployed to Vietnam. Below are the subjects Marines were exposed to at these CGCI schools before deploying to Vietnam:

Course I (Week One): Counter-Guerilla Operations:

0-1: Introduction
0-2: History of Modern Guerilla Warfare
0-3: Fundamentals of Insurgency Movements
0-4: Communist Bloc Operations
0-5: History of Communist Doctrine
0-6: Case Study South East Asia
0-7: Communist Guerilla Organization and Control
0-8 & 8a: Guerilla Operations I & II
0-9: Area Organization
0-10: Deployment of the Battalion Landing Team
0-11: Combat Base Development
0-12: Intelligence Practices
0-13: Isolation
0-14: Control Measures
0-15: Patrolling Techniques
0-16: Long Range Radio Expedients
0-17: Medical Considerations
0-18: Drop Zones:
0-19: Guidelines for Advisors
0-20: Military Civic Action

Course II (Week Two): Psychological Operations

0-21: Introduction to Insurgency
0-22: Psychological Effects of Actions (Political, Economic, Social, Military and Psychological)
0-23: Propaganda Media (Printed)

21 *Small Wars Manual*, 43.

0-24: Propaganda Recognition
0-25: Persuasive techniques
0-26: Key Communications
0-27: Face to Face Persuasion
0-28: Interrogation and Interpreters
0-29: Search of Personnel,
0-30: Search of Vehicles
0-31: Search of, Huts and grounds
0-32: Role of Supporting Arms
0-33: Bail Out Drills
0-34: Immediate Action Drills
0-35: Village Seizure and Search
0-36: Ambushes
0-37: Patrol Bases:
0-38: Training Management
0-39: Destructive Tactics
0-40: Mobs, Riots and Demonstrations
0-41: Poncho Parachutes:
0-42: Motivations Behind Guerilla Warfare
0-43: Jungle Warfare Indoctrination
0-44: Role of U. S. in Counterinsurgency[22]

Like Colonel Mike Wyly (USMC, Ret.), Bob Setser was a graduate of the U.S. Army's counterinsurgency warfare school at Fort Bragg and an instructor in the Krulak school within the Marine Corps at Camp Pendleton as Marines passed through CGCI training prior to being deployed to South Vietnam. CGCI played a huge role in helping form future Marine warfighting doctrine.

Major Setser, who spent a year at the school immersed in CGCI, was asked how it influenced his tour of duty in Vietnam. He offered a lengthy and extremely valuable reply. "I have reflected on that question . . . and I have come to the conclusion that my time with the CG/CI School had a profound effect on most, if not all, of my activities during my combat tour at Chu Lai," replied the officer. "Vigilance and security were two major themes that were heavily emphasized throughout the course from day one. The VC would not stand up

22 These lessons in their entirety were provided by Maj. Robert Setser, an instructor for the CGCI schools.

and fight toe-to-toe. Their tactics were long-range sniping, ambush, and booby traps," he continued. "They preyed on units that were lax, inattentive, or sloppy. They would not normally engage a Marine unit that had proper security on the march and were vigilant on halts or when in a defensive position."

"My CG/CI training kicked in about 45 minutes after we landed at Chu Lai," continued Major Setser...

> For the trip down from Okinawa to RVN the company was split between two ships. About half of the company and I were on one ship. The Captain and most of the company officers and the remainder of the company were on the other ship. When the LSM transporting us from the ship to the shore dropped its ramp we were met with a scene of great confusion. Out of this chaos came a young sergeant yelling for Lt. Setser. I identified myself and he asked me to form up the company and he would guide us to our assembly area. When ready, he led us four or five hundred meters inland and stopped near some large sand dunes that formed a large bowl. The sergeant stated that the trucks to transport us to our company area would arrive shortly and then he departed.
>
> The troops crapped out as they are wont to do and the wait began. Maps had not been issued so I had no idea where I was. I surveyed the area and there was no activity at all. No troops or vehicles which one would expect to find behind a landing beach. It occurred to me that we were totally isolated and just the kind of target that the VC relished. I called for my Gunnery Sgt and told him that I wanted the machine guns up on top of the bowl-shaped dunes and laid in and that I wanted the remainder of the troops to establish a defensive perimeter. About six hours after we occupied the position the trucks finally showed up. I am certain that most of the troops and probably the SNCOs thought that the Lt. was nuts, but that was of no concern to me. From this point forward to the end of my tour I admittedly was paranoid about security and I was a 1st Class SOB when it came to enforcing it.

Major Setser served as the Weapons Platoon Leader, and was aware of rumors that exposure to combat had revealed serious problems with the M-60 machine gun. "I also realized," he continued,

> that weapons' malfunction usually was the result of a dirty weapon. [Note: In the case of initial issue of the M-16s it was a design deficiency.] While we were still on Okinawa preparing to go south to RVN, I made it very clear that one of my highest priorities was weapons' cleanliness and that I expected the M-60s to be prepared for

inspection at any time. It was not a "hard sell." I had some truly outstanding young Sgt. squad leaders and Cpl. MG team leaders, and they embraced the policy without reservation. I observed on numerous occasions the extra precautions the teams took to protect their weapons from the elements or the dirt or sand.

"Another policy I established with regard to the M-60 MGs was not so well received," admitted Major Setser:

In every picture or video of combat troops in RVN you will see troops with linked belts of MG ammo draped across their bodies, usually crisscrossed á la "Poncho Villa." The image made for great photos to send home to the parents or girlfriends, but it virtually guaranteed that you were going to be feeding dirty ammo into that M-60. Having grown up in a southern Illinois family where hunting was a tradition, I was taught at a very young age by my grandfather, when it came to weapons and ammo, that "cleanliness was next to Godliness." When we returned from a hunt, regardless of the hour, our guns were always cleaned before we went to bed. With this background it was not hard to see how I found the practice of carrying the ammo exposed to dirt, sand, and rice paddies appalling. Among the accessories that came with the M-60, like the spare barrel and asbestos glove, was a so-called assault pouch. It was a small canvas pouch that attached to the feeding side of the M-60 receiver and it held a hundred rounds protected from the elements.

Although I had been on active duty for three years, until my Plt Sgt told me about the pouches I had no idea they existed. I had never seen them used. Once we arrived in RVN I established a policy that when operating on offensive missions all six M-60s would utilize the assault pouch. I further announced that all linked MG ammo would remain in the ammo cans until it was needed. There were no "Poncho Villa" photo ops in my platoon. These policies were about as well received as a loud fart in church. My gunners did not like it because it meant the weight of the M-60, which they carried, was going to be increased by a few pounds. The ammo carriers didn't like it because carrying those ammo cans was a royal pain in the ass. Combat is a royal pain in the ass as well. Although they did not like it, being the good Marines they were, they complied and it soon became routine.

"Perhaps in my own mind I felt somewhat exonerated in implementing those unpopular practices by the simple fact that the MGs worked every time and all the time," he explained.

I never experienced one example of one of my guns jamming or malfunctioning. Of much lesser importance is the fact that near the end of my tour, when I was the Company Commander, a FMF Pac Ordnance Inspection team showed up at my CP unannounced and informed me that the purpose of their visit was to inspect my M-60s. (Note: I did not realize that units were subject to formal inspections when deployed in combat.) I provided them a guide to my MG positions as they were deployed on the line, and after a couple of hours they returned to my CP to debrief me. This de-brief was in fact very brief. The CWO team leader simply stated: "Captain my team has inspected every Marine Corps M-60 from the DMZ to southern I Corps and you, without question, have the finest set of Marine M-60s in RVN." I was pleased but not surprised. (Vigilance-CG/CI, plus southern Illinois common sense, is that if you put clean ammo into clean weapons they generally work.)

With regard to employment of the guns, my CG/CI experience prompted me to establish procedures to enhance the security of the Company when it was moving in column through enemy territory. When on the move, I insisted that at least one MG team was positioned near the front of the column. Additionally, when the company halted due to the heat, fatigue, and weight we were carrying, most of the company would just collapse in place. This made the company most vulnerable. At these times I would have my MG teams move 10 to15 meters away from the column and established firing positions for these guns. Normally there would be three guns on each side of the column. My recon teams would act as sentries observing the terrain on both flanks of the company. Months later when I returned to take command of the company, these procedures were still being used. By this time, the company had been issued two 60mm mortars. On halts I employed these mortars as the MGs were employed with one mortar guarding each flank. The mortars were not registered, they were just deployed so that they could quickly fire if required. While I was Weapons Platoon Leader or Company Commander the company was never harassed or surprised when the column was halted. (More Vigilance-Security-CG/CI.)

"A Platoon, Company, or even a Battalion moving through enemy territory was inviting disaster if they failed to provide security for the flanks of the column," warned the major. The ambush, he continued,

was the favorite tactic employed by the VC against our forces operating in southern I Corps in '65-66. To provide the required security, depending upon the size of the unit, a certain number of troops (Sqd or Plt) were deployed to each flank near the head of the column at a specified distance. They moved with the column searching for bunkers or

terrain that provided good cover or concealment for an ambush site. It was usually horrible duty for the "flankers" as the main body of the column usually moved on a trail or a road while the flankers in many cases were literally "beating the bush." It was normally exhausting work and depended on the terrain; the flankers had to be replaced with fresh troops at regular intervals. The rate of march for the main body was, by doctrine, dictated by rate of march of the flankers, but in RVN that was rarely the case.

Commanders and Operations Officers ignoring the terrain and ignorant of time and distance factors would place unrealistic deadlines on units to be at a certain place within a certain time. The result was predictable; units would move the flankers in toward the main body and pick up the pace. Eventually the flankers would rejoin the main body and there would be no flank security, thereby exposing the unit to ambush. If lucky the unit would meet the deadline and the Cols and Majs would be happy.

Personally I was never pressured to compromise my flank security during movements because I worked for an outstanding, tactically competent Battalion Commander and an Operations Officer who never imposed unrealistic deadlines on me. Had they done so I would have ignored them and accepted the consequences.

"One of the basic percepts of counter-guerilla warfare is that you avoid establishing routines, especially when it comes to movements of the unit. I will cite but one example to illustrate this," Major Setser continued,

In the spring of '66, on Operation Nevada, 1/7 again found itself on the Batangan Peninsula, site of Operation Piranha the previous September. The Col established his CP on the southern tip of the peninsula. Since I had been in the village of Phu Qui in September my company was assigned the mission of searching and clearing the village. The village was located approximately 2000 meters north of the CP. Early the next morning the Company moved out in column and upon reaching the village began the search. My 2d Plt quickly discovered a tunnel and sent in search teams. A firefight ensued and lasted all day. We discovered the tunnel was much larger than we thought and was multi-layered. Realizing that we were not going to finish clearing the tunnel in one day, I requested permission to establish a perimeter around the village and remain overnight to prevent the VC we knew were in the tunnel from escaping. My request was denied and I was ordered back to the CP. The Company was formed up and I directed the point to take a different route back to the CP. After briefing the Col my mission was expanded to continue the tunnel search and prepare it for destruction. The next day, on the way back to Phu Qui, we were to take yet another route. I learned that

> 27 armed VC escaped overnight. We took yet another route back to the CP that evening. I think you can see where I am heading with this. I had to move my company between two fixed points 2000 meters in hostile territory over a three-day period. The company made six trips between the village and the CP and used a different route each time. Avoid patterns and routines. (More Vigilance–Security–CG/CI.)

"My initial exposure to PsyOps was during my year at the CG/CI School," explained Setser. "As I researched Communist guerilla tactics I came to realize how much importance they placed on it and what a powerful weapon it could be in controlling or influencing the populace if employed properly.To my knowledge," he continued, "the previous US efforts at conducting PsyOps had been limited in scope and only marginally effective. Many commanders in RVN had no interest (or knowledge) of PsyOps and thought it a waste of time. This is the reality that Mike Wyly faced on a regular basis during his tour as the Div PsyOps officer."

Another PsyOps opportunity presented itself a few weeks later when a VC unit attempted to ambush one of Setser's platoon patrols and a running gunfight broke out. As the VC withdrew, they murdered two of the village women, one of whom was pregnant. The major crossed the river the next morning to investigate the incident, and shortly after he arrived fifteen or twenty women from the village approached him, crying and wailing and very angry at the VC. "They begged me to put some Marines in their village to protect them from the VC," explained the major, who continued:

> I had requested this to Battalion but had repeatedly been turned down. I did not have the material to make a C-Rat carbon press so I had some C-Rat boxes cut up to make 4 or 5 poster boards. I dictated a message to my VN intel-specialist and he transcribed it to the poster boards. These were displayed in prominent places in the village complex. In addition to this limited propaganda effort it was a policy in my company that all enemy propaganda when encountered was to be destroyed. None of the events described above would have occurred had I not been assigned to the CG/CI School.

Although he was trained at the Basic School on how and where to establish ambushes, Major Setser also learned how to refine the basic concept. For example, when they were preparing for to make a night movement, the VC would frequently send women or children down the trail ahead of them to make sure it was safe. "To counter this," explained Setser, "my troops were instructed to police up any VC scouts and hold them until the ambush was

sprung or until daylight. This happened twice while I was in command." Another tactic he learned at the school was that when setting night ambushes, wait until the last possible light before occupying the actual ambush site. "I used both of these techniques extensively while I commanded the company," admitted the major. "When deployed on the Chu Lai perimeter I employed a vigorous patrolling and night ambush effort. The effort was reasonably successful."

Another important concept he learned at the CG/CI School was the importance of the military's policy of "winning the hearts and minds" of the local populace. "To embrace this policy I did not permit my troops to fire blindly and randomly at perceived threats," noted Setser. "I kept them on a tight leash. I did not enter villages with guns blazing. I did not permit abuse of prisoners by my troops. I continued the policy implemented by my predecessor of providing limited medical care to the elderly and children of the villagers we were searching. How effective were these efforts, I have no idea."[23]

It is readily apparent the CGCI schooling offered the needed balance between fighting insurgents and winning over civilians. The "Small Wars" DNA within the Marine Corps provided the exact approach needed in this Cold War/proxy environment that nevertheless turned attritionist. As conditions escalated and the politicians back home wanted measurable results (i.e. "body counts"), this mixed bag of strategy and tactics for the Marine Corps eventually went down the attritional force-on-force path. As a result, the Marine Corps returned to the more conventional battlefields in South Vietnam when and where the enemy otherwise refused to engage. The American Way of War in Vietnam, explained historian Russell Weigley, "had given no place to static defense in American military doctrine if the means for a more active campaign existed; this fact goes far to explain the shift of the Marines' role at Da Nang from defense of the airport to mobile counter-insurgency within a fifty-mile radius."[24]

Eventually, the Marines in Vietnam were ordered to abandon the very strategies that were proving successful in the battlespace in favor of the politically expedient numbers game being played in and for American media outlets. Irrespective of the fact the United States in general, and the Marine

23 Setser email to the author, June 2015. Major Setser spent a year at the school and wrote and updated several lesson plans and gave many lectures there. He attended all the formal schools on CG/CI operations and "was totally immersed in the subject."

24 Weigley, *American Way of War,* 464.

Corps in particular, was winning the counter-guerilla/counter-insurgency war, the political aspects were deemed more important than victories that relied upon the "Small Wars" strategies and tactics enjoying military success after success. This did not seem to lessen the growing disenchantment of the American public, which was seeking a speedy culmination to what appeared to them like a long drawn-out war we were losing. Counter-insurgency efforts (which were not a short-term investment) did not produce the "theater" effect that attritional warfare was supposed to garner for the political establishment in Washington, DC.

Within the Marine Corps were ad hoc uses of maneuver warfare being applied in the battlespace. General Al Gray spoke about a maneuver warfare experience he had created while on duty in Quang Tri/Con Tiên with the 12th Marines in 1967. The thread of this part of Marine Corps DNA (maneuver warfare) was being brought into play by some Marines intent on lessening the carnage for the Marines in their chain of command. Because of his prior experiences in the Far East, then-Major Al Gray experimented with an unauthorized application of maneuver warfare that proved successful at the time while greatly lowering the casualty rates being suffered prior to his taking the command. In effect, he was emulating the tactics of the CAP units by sending out patrols to contact and engage the enemy on their side of the wire.

"So the Maneuver Warfare idea is not new per se, and generally over time when you read about war and conflict and think about it, every professional of course understands it and how in Europe it grew," explained General Gray, who continued as follows:

> Also how in the 1800s we built tactical capabilities around the infantry regiment and all the countries adopted it and that kind of thing, That's a part of your schoolhouse along the way.
>
> And so we came up with a concept that every night I would move the whole unit. I generally was more of a believer in the Eastern philosophy of warfare and strategy, and as I spent a lot of time in the Far East I was more of a Sun Tzu kind of guy, the way [the Chinese] did it, and of course I had my experiences in Korea and the use of intelligence through recon before I got commissioned.
>
> In Vietnam, for example, when I was a Commander at Gio Linh we were getting shelled every day up there. In April and May we took about 150 casualties each month with all this incoming, and I made them dig down and all that.

"You know I always believed that we could move as well at night as [the North Vietnamese] could. Of course my orders were that I couldn't leave Gio Linh because we had to stay right there and protect it," lamented Gray, "but I really didn't follow these orders because I think we had a better chance to protect Gio Linh if we are not killed or wounded." General Gray continued:

> Between myself and a few people out of Gio Linh we formed a mechanized task force and I put a different Marine officer in charge and I'd give them the mission of going out between Gio Linh and here and there and move them around, disrupting things if you will, and setting up and continuing to fire all these counter-battery missions in the southern part of North Vietnam's militarized zone.
>
> So we did that throughout the month of June, and though we continued to get incoming into Gio Linh, I was there by myself with a couple of my Marines, and in June we only had 4 slightly wounded. So I kept with that system in June and early July and kept it in mind, a little bit to do with the new thought process, moving around and all that kind of thing
>
> I didn't call it that and didn't realize that but I was actually using mission-type orders even then—go out there and tell what to do and not how we do it—while I was telling everyone underneath what they were doing and what to do if something went wrong. You have to understand, for example, that on the 8 May before we did this in 1967, we got severely attacked and were basically the only outpost that could reach [the NVA] really well with artillery and direct-support artillery, and we fired almost 4,000 rounds to help us survive that night. I had some very strong feelings about these kinds of things."[25]

Returning to its base wartime beliefs at such places as Da Nang, Operation Starlite, the Nine Village Program, Chu Lai, Phu Bai, Harvest Moon, Double Eagle, Operation Hastings, Operation Prairie, Operation Union, Tet Offensive, Khe Sanh I & II, Dong Ha, Con Thien and Hue City, the Marine Corps became firmly re-ensconced in seek and destroy missions, offensive actions, and concentrations of force-on-force efforts whenever the enemy chose to fight.

As serious in nature as Belleau Wood, Guadalcanal, Iwo Jima, and the Chosin Reservoir, the battle for Hue City was the longest and bloodiest battle

25 Gray, in-person interview with the author.

of the Tet Offensive for the Marine Corps. The battle lasted 28 days and a total of three Marine battalions and eleven Army of the Republic of Vietnam battalions were eventually committed to retaking the city. The Marines lost 216 killed and 1,364 wounded, while the Army of the Republic of Vietnam lost 384 killed and 1,830 wounded. Heavy street fighting followed the Marines all the way through the city for more than three weeks. Marines of the 1st and 5th Regiments, fighting alongside the Army of the Republic of Vietnam's 1st Division while also supported by U.S. Army 7th and 12th Cavalry Regiments, drove the North Vietnamese and Vietcong forces out of Hue, taking the city back one costly block at a time.

Many of the Marines of Task Force X-Ray had little or no urban combat experience, nor were they trained for urban close-quarters combat. Because it was monsoon season, it was virtually impossible for the Marine Corps to use air support and combined arms methodology to any great effect as they had going back to the Caribbean "Small Wars," where Marine Corps aviators began to perfect the art of combined arms. Once again, attrition took its toll as Marines fought from building-to-building and block-to-block to eliminate the dug-in Vietcong and NVA invaders in the Tet Offensive of 1968.[26]

The following two citations for the award of the Navy Cross stand as testament to the intensity of the fighting for Hue City as a new page was turned in the urban combat environment for the Marine Corps:

Cheatham, Ernest C., Jr. Colonel, Marine Corps

Commanding Officer, 2th Battalion, 5th Marines, 1st Marine Division (Rein.) FMF
Date of Action: February 3–March 3, 1968

Citation:

The Navy Cross is presented to Ernest C. Cheatham, Jr., Colonel, Marine Corps, for extraordinary heroism while serving as Commanding Officer of the Second Battalion, Fifth Marines, First Marine Division (Reinforced), Fleet Marine Force, in the Republic of Vietnam from 3 February to 3 March 1968. During Operation Hue City, Colonel (then Lieutenant Colonel) Cheatham led his battalion in extremely heavy house-to-house fighting against a numerically superior North Vietnamese Army force.

26 Cooling, "Winning the Battle While Losing the War," USMC *Gazette* 2001.

Advancing through the city on 4 February to assault the well-fortified Treasury Building/Post Office complex, his unit came under intense fire from concealed enemy positions. The enemy resistance halted the Marines' advance during two days of bitter fighting. Nevertheless, Colonel Cheatham remained steadfast in his determination to secure the enemy stronghold. Skillfully deploying a 106-mm. recoilless rifle squad into advantageous firing positions, he personally pinpointed the targets with M-16 tracer rounds and directed accurate fire on the enemy, which significantly reduced the pressure on his assaulting force. Completely disregarding his own safety, he joined the assaulting unit and aggressively led his men in routing the North Vietnamese from their entrenched positions. While proceeding through the city on 6 February, he organized his battalion for an assault on the enemy-held Provincial Headquarters Building. Ignoring the hostile fire all around him, he directed his men to covered positions while he fearlessly advanced to an exposed position from which he could locate the sources of enemy fire. Calling an Ontos forward, he directed effective suppressive fire on the enemy and then courageously led his unit as it continued the assault. Colonel Cheatham's dynamic and heroic leadership and his unflagging example inspired all who observed him and contributed greatly to the defeat of the enemy and to their subsequent withdrawal from the city. His dauntless courage and unfaltering devotion to duty upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.

Christmas, George R. Captain, Marine Corps

Company H, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines, 1st Marine Division (Rein.) FMF
Date of Action: February 5, 1968

Citation:

The Navy Cross is presented to George R. Christmas, Captain, Marine Corps, for extraordinary heroism while serving as the Commanding Officer of Company H, Second Battalion, Fifth Marines, First Marine Division (Reinforced), Fleet Marine Force, in connection with operations against the enemy in the Republic of Vietnam. On the afternoon of 5 February 1968 during Operation HUE CITY, Company H was attacking a complex of buildings known to be an enemy strong point consisting of mutually supporting bunkers, fighting holes, and trench lines. During the ensuing firefight, two platoons seized the corner building of a city block, but intense hostile small-arms, automatic weapons, and B-40 rocket fire temporarily halted the advance. Realizing the seriousness of the situation and the urgent need to sustain the momentum

> of the attack, Captain Christmas, undaunted by the heavy volume of enemy fire, completely disregarded his own safety as he moved across thirty-five meters of open area to join the lead element and assess the situation. Returning across the fire-swept area, he rejoined the remaining platoon, issued an attack order, and then ran seventy meters across open terrain, ignoring automatic weapons fire, hand grenades, and satchel charges striking around him to reach a tank he had requested. Braving enemy fire and two B-40 rockets that hit the tank, he fearlessly stood atop the vehicle to direct accurate fire against the hostile positions until the intensity of enemy fire diminished. Immediately realizing the tactical advantage, he jumped from the tank, and directed his company in an aggressive assault on the hostile positions, personally leading his men in room-to-room fighting until the building complex was secured. In a large measure due to his bold initiative and courageous actions, he provided the impetus which inspired his men to aggressive action and enabled them to successfully accomplish the mission. By his dynamic leadership, unfaltering determination and selfless devotion to duty in the face of extreme personal danger, Captain Christmas upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.[27]

As in other conflicts mentioned, the Marine Corps paid a heavy price in terms of KIA and WIA during the Vietnam War. Of the 317,400 Marines who cycled through Vietnam, 32% were casualties, with 12,962 killed and 88,542 wounded.

Vietnam is where the maneuver warfare seeds were re-sown to grow into the evolution that eventually became the Marine Corps Way of War. It was in Vietnam the major "maneuverists" unknowingly formed a karmic bond that would create the opportunity to evolve the Marine Corps. Men such as Wyly, Webb, and Gray were beginning the thought process of finding a "smarter way" for Marines to fight.

Marine Corps, 1983

In the years leading up to Iran Hostage Rescue, Lebanon, and Grenada, the Marine Corps spent most of its time in reorganization and internal development, restructuring and downsizing for the peacetime environment.

27 http: valor.defense.gov/Recipients/MarineCorpsNavyCrossRecipients.aspx, accessed April 2, 2014.

Operation Eagle Claw in Iran, together with our experiences in Lebanon and Grenada sounded warning bells that the Marine Corps was not ready on many levels to be "the force in readiness" or "the first to fight" for the United States and its many interests abroad.

While the Marine Corps was rebuilding, outside the Corps was a core element of disparate forces at work, in most cases unbeknownst to one another. In the long view, these actors would aid in bringing about the institutionalization that would transform the Marine Corps into its current maneuver warfare doctrinal philosophy.

General Krulak captured the *force majeure* of the maneuver warfare evolution. It is here, ultimately, that the successes in this area can be attributed:

> Marines, of course, have always shone most brightly when the stakes were highest. The NCO's that led the bloody assaults on the German machine-gun positions at Belleau Wood intuitively understood the importance of their role.
>
> The Marines of 2nd Battalion, 28th Marines, who scaled the fire-swept heights of Mount Suribachi, needed no one to emphasize the necessity of initiative.
>
> The Marines of the Chosin Reservoir, of Hue City, and of countless other battles through the years did not wait to be reminded of their individual responsibilities. They behaved as Marines always have, and as we expect today's Marines and those of the future to behave, with courage, with aggressiveness, and with resolve. The future battlefields on which Marines fight will be increasingly hostile, lethal, and chaotic. Our success will hinge, as it always has, on the leadership of our junior Marines. We must ensure that they are prepared.[28]

As will soon be evident, General Krulack has long been a strong proponent of the Marine Corps' evolutionary development of maneuver warfare.

28 Charles Krulak, "The Strategic Corporal: Leadership in the Three Block War," *Marines Magazine*, January 1999, www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/usmc/strategic corporal.htm, accessed December 20, 2013.

KIA / WIA Statistics for the USMC and US Army (1917 to 1991)[29]

War	Strength	KIA	%	WIA	%	Total Losses	%
WW I							
ARMY	4,057,101	50,510	1	193,663	5%	24,4173	6%
USMC	78,839	2,461	3	9,520	12%	11,981	15%
USMC in Combat	32,000	2,459	8	8,907	28%	11,366	36%
WWII							
US ARMY	11,260,000	23,4874	2	565,861	5%	800,735	7%
USMC	669,100	19,733	3	67,207	10%	86,940	13%
USMC in Combat	485,053	19,733	4	67,207	14%	86,940	18%
KOREA							
US ARMY	2,834,000	27,731	1	77,569	3%	105,300	4%
USMC	424,000	4,267	1	23,744	6%	28,011	7%
* USMC Combat	74,279	4,262	6	26,043	35%	30,305	41%
VIETNAM							
US ARMY	4,368,000	30,963	0.7	104,723	2%	135,686	3%
USMC	794,000	13,039	2	37,202	5%	50,241	6%
USMC in Combat	317,400	12,926	4	88,542	28%	101,468	32%
DESERT STORM							
US ARMY	782,000	98	0.01	354	0.0%	452	0.1%
USMC	213,000	24	0.01	92	0.0%	116	0.1%
USMC in Combat	92,000	24	0.03	92	0.1%	116	0.1%

29 Note the two sources cited below are not in agreement due to the Total Force calculations. The table reflects worldwide forces during these wars. Congressional Research Service, *American War and Military Operations Casualties: Lists and Statistics,* 26 February 2010, 2-3, www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RL32492.pdf, accessed May 14, 2014; Simmons, "USMC History," 100, 175, 210, 247, 310.

Chapter 3

From Congress to the Corps

"All the forces in the world are not as powerful as an idea whose time has come."

—Victor Hugo

This chapter focuses on the genesis of what some have incorrectly called a Revolution in Military Affairs (or RMA), and its early introduction by a group of "Reformers" from inside and outside of the Marine Corps. Understanding the role played by this group is critical to understand how and why the Corps fights as it does.[1]

The term "reform" had been routinely misapplied by people in and out of the media during the post-Vietnam War period. The reform concept regarding maneuver warfare in general for the Marine Corps runs from the early 1970s through 1986. As such, it covers the unofficial doctrinal, strategic, and tactical implementation by the Marine Corps' II MEF at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, by General Al Gray.[2]

The concept of maneuver warfare and its possible implementation by the U.S. military can be traced to four or five independent and somewhat unrelated sources, each initially working independent of the others. Not all of these efforts were from inside the military. In fact, much of the initiative came from the civilian sector. "The beginnings of maneuverism were akin to a 20-gauge shotgun blast of buckshot hitting these targets of potential strategic and tactical

1 "Reformer" is not precisely accurate, but for purposes of discussion it will serve as a general frame of reference.

2 Gray and Wyly, interviews with the author.

change," explained Colonel Michael Wyly (USMC, ret.), one of the prime movers behind the concept.[3]

Initially, the independent and driving forces behind maneuverism included the following individuals: William "Bill" Lind, who was working for Ohio Senator Robert A. Taft (and later on the staff of Colorado Senator Gary Hart); Colonel John Boyd, USAF; Brigadier General Al Gray (at the time Commander of the II MEF), and; Colonel Wyly (a Gray and Trainor confidant and instructor at the Marine Corps' Amphibious Warfare School). These men were aided by a cadre of Marine Corps officers considered the "Free Thinkers," who helped start the so-called RMA. It should be noted that Colonel Boyd was usually ignored or discounted in his scholarship within the U.S. Air Force as well as the Department of Defense when he ventured away from his specialty of fighter jet design and tactics. However, his biographer, Robert Coram, characterized Col. Boyd as "the founder, leader, and spiritual center of this guerrilla movement within the Pentagon."[4]

Although each of these men brought different skill sets and concepts to the table, the end result is that their efforts combined to reintroduce a German-type maneuver warfare to both the Army and the Corps. It is important to stress that "reintroduce" is the correct term because the American military had previous firsthand knowledge of these tactics, strategies, and doctrine garnered by both intelligence and direct combat against the Germans in North Africa and on the European continent during World War II.[5]

* * *

The military/political climate within the United States immediately following the Vietnam War reflected the somberness of the perceived yet unwarranted perceptions of military failure in Southeast Asia. Any failure there must be laid squarely at the feet of the political class that actually ran the war in Vietnam. The new initiative in doctrine was also joined with the economic responsibility of rebuilding the Defense Department at this time. Ancillary to this was the need to create a much smaller peacetime military.

3 Wyly, interview with the author.

4 Col. Bill Wood, USMC (ret.) and Col. Gary I. Wilson USMC (ret.), interviews with the author; Coram, "*Boyd*," 442.

5 Gray interview, supported interviews with Lind and Wyly interviews with the author.

Congress's fiscal responsibility associated with this drawdown of strength to prewar levels (or lower) became the magnet that would eventually attract the "revolutionists" or "maneuverists."[6]

Bill Lind is the first of the five major actors in this development. He latched onto this concept of rebuilding and downsizing the military and made it his *raison d'etre* during this period. More than any other civilian in this effort, he contributed not only to the political aspects but also (to a lesser degree) to the historical military foundations of maneuver warfare. As a Senate staffer, a protagonist like Lind needed to justify his role in downsizing the military. Eventually, however, he overstayed his welcome during the Krulak commandancy.[7]

Lind carried with him to this debate his extensive knowledge of German military strategy and tactics. He also enhanced the concepts that would eventually become the *modus operandi* of "maneuverism" and the eventual doctrinal changes institutionalized by the Marine Corps. As the earliest public non-military proponent, Lind's transformational work helped set this shift in motion, and he gave his time and guidance freely and on a continual basis.[8]

After graduating from Princeton University with a Master's Degree in German history, Lind found work in 1973 as a staffer with Senator Howard Taft III. Once ensconced in this powerful advisory role, Lind collected the attention of the Marine Corps. He parlayed the need for the Corps to be responsive to the Congressional call for downsizing while maintaining its distinct role as warriors from the sea. He did not gain the same traction with the Army or any other branch of the service. This was evidenced by the Army's lack of interest in changing its doctrinal perspective and implementing the

6 "Rep. Newt Gingrich, et. al., To President Ronald Reagan, August 6, 1982." Unpublished letter from Congressional Military Reform Caucus, in personal papers of Col. Pat Garvey. "Revolution in Military Affairs" or RMA is not really applicable because its original connotation did not offer anything at all new in the context of general military history. Neither would it pass the Michael Howard or Geoffrey Parker litmus tests for a true RMA. The term nevertheless received significant traction and further usage because of the press generated by the actions of the conservative Congressional Caucus and its need to move the country and its military back to a non-war footing socially, politically, and economically.

7 Gen. Charles Krulak, "Re: Maneuver Warfare USMC," e-mail message to author October 20, 2012.

8 Bill Lind, interview with the author.

German style of maneuver warfare. The Marine Corps did not have that luxury.[9]

Lind's pitch was that if properly copied from the German schools, maneuver warfare would reduce the costs of fielding infantry and lead to fewer casualties. The Marine Corps owed its modern existence to Congress, which in more than one instance kept the Corps from being absorbed by the Army—its bigger partner in warfighting. A number of presidents had also tried to disband the Marine Corps at various points during American history. Therefore, the Corps had to listen to, if not accept, the fact that the current direction of the Congressional Military Reform Caucus on the subject of military reorganization was paramount to its continued role as a unique, stand-alone military arm of the nation. Lind insinuated himself into the Marine Corps paradigm development by playing the all-important Congressional card. His demeanor and his hubris would eventually be the cause of his removal from the Marine Corps maneuver warfare development effort. He and a few of the original developers remain to this day the biggest critics of the Marine Corps' evolutionary maneuver development program.

In 1982, the Congressional Military Reform Caucus petitioned President Ronald Reagan to assist in these efforts to downsize the military while maintaining military effectiveness. Under the leadership of Georgia Congressman Newt Gingrich, a letter was drafted and sent to the White House outlining the problems facing the nation in this effort. In short, the letter—signed by the entire Caucus—sought the aid of the Secretary of Defense, the National Security Advisor, and the President to reform the "Pentagon bureaucracy so that military spending would fall in line with the postwar downsizing plans of the Congress." The letter concluded with a plea "to implement an action plan to adjust the military budget in spite of the fact that the Pentagon is the largest bureaucracy spender while cloaking itself under the banner of national survival."[10]

Congress knew its responsibility not only to the nation but also to the military in resolving this fiscal dilemma. The politics of the situation would eventually play out in favor of the military industrial complex, while bringing a

9 USMA Senior XX Conference.

10 Congressional Military Reform Caucus Letter to President Ronald Reagan dated August 6, 1982, from the private files of Colonel Pat Garvey.

codified institutionalization of maneuver warfare into the micro world of the Marine Corps going forward.

Prior to this missive to President Reagan, a three-day seminar was held at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. In June 1982, a Senior Conference studied The "Military Reform" Debate: Directions for the Defense Establishment through the Remainder of the Century. This conference focused primarily on how to downsize the Defense Department per the Congressional mandate while offering maneuver warfare thinking as a way to get a less expensive, lighter, and more effective military in the Cold War. The attendees were representative of the factions in play who wanted, or did not want, to adopt maneuver warfare while lessening the effects of attritional warfare on the armed forces. Of importance to the maneuver warfare concept was the Marine Corps contingent that was in attendance, along with Boyd and his acolytes and the likes of conservative Gingrich, Bill Lind, and other Congressional maneuver warfare advocates.

The three-day session concluded with a pronouncement by attritionist Gen. Edward C. Meyers. During his tenure, General Meyers prosecuted an Army-wide modernization program with emphasis on quality over quantity. Meyers stressed the need for a long-term investment in land force materiel, and launched a unit-manning system to reduce personnel turbulence and enhance readiness. He was very clear that the Army was not about to go in the direction of the "maneuverist" Marine Corps. The Marines, on the other hand, were already well down the path to this sought-after change in its doctrine, strategy, and tactics for its future role in warfare. The maneuverists' efforts on all fronts naturally turned to the Corps and its perceived move toward warfare as an operational art.[11]

While the wheels were moving politically on the Congressional level to reposition the American military in general, others were working in the same direction at this time to recast the Corps. General Gray, as mentioned earlier, had been a student of military history throughout his Marine Corps career and had a penchant for the work of the Chinese philosopher Sun Tzu as it applied to military strategy and tactics. Foremost in Gray's mind was the concept of keeping Marines at the tip of the spear while limiting the carnage and costs that naturally resulted from the attritionists' method of fighting World War I,

11 USMA Senior Conference XX, 38-39.

World War II, the Korea Conflict, Vietnam, and the recent attack launched upon the Marines' UN peacekeeping forces in Beirut.[12]

At this time the American Way of Warfighting doctrine emulated the French synchronization model and the American penchant to pit might against might until an enemy was beaten into total submission and surrender. General Gray came from a different perspective. He knew the Marine Corps had applied maneuver warfare successfully in its "Small Wars" encounters and during the Victor "Brute" Krulak CAP program in Vietnam. The Corps also had the disadvantage of being a much smaller force when compared to the much larger Army. The future role of the Marines during the Cold War envisioned pitting them against the Soviet Union's massive numbers in what would amount to a force-on-force attritionist meeting somewhere in northwestern Europe. The Corps needed to find a better way for General Gray's outnumbered Marines to fight. The farsighted general was looking for a formula for future success in a possible Cold War large-scale encounter.[13]

While Gray was pondering this issue, Colonel John Boyd, a formidable thinker and a profound military philosopher in his own right, was doing the same thing. Through a Socratic process of understanding success on the battlefield, Boyd brought to bear the concepts of his personal combat successes in what he termed the OODA Loop (Observe-Orient-Decide-Act). The OODA opened up doors for understanding how to apply maneuver warfare in combat, and it went hand in glove with the German aspects of maneuver warfare —especially at the tactical level. The key element for Boyd (and others in the movement) was not the academic knowledge garnered from the study, but the transformation of the thought process in applying the tenets embodied in and by maneuver warfare. This thought transformation would lead to the fluid application of actions that would create the dynamic of pitting strength against weakness in tactical situations for the Marine Corps.[14]

The speed with which one is able to cycle through the OODA in a combat situation determines the success of the outcome. Its successful application creates disruptions or mismatches within the opponent's chain of command

12 Gray, interview with the author.

13 Michael Howard "Men against Fire," in *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, Peter Paret, ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 514; Garvey, interview, re: USMC - Norway / NATO Training Exercises.

14 Boyd, OODA Loop Cycling Chart; Wilson and Wyly, In person interviews with the author.

that became exploitable chinks in their warfare armor. By rapidly cycling through the OODA Loop, these mismatches enable the user to pit his strength against an enemy weakness, especially if the enemy is seeking attritional warfare. Boyd's work went further and deeper in this understanding as he developed other theses of this philosophy. He took the OODA from a personal expression as a Korean War jet fighter ace into a universal warfighting treatise when he applied the theories of the OODA Loop to significant battles throughout Western military history in his groundbreaking *Patterns of Conflict*.[15]

Boyd's seminal work transitioned into the pivotal seminar he would give over the years to those interested in the fine points of maneuver warfare. Boyd had moved outside the box even before the cliché of "thinking outside the box" was put into the American lexicon. Eventually, General Gray heard Boyd's presentation. Before he acted upon it, General Gray heard the presentation three or four times. With each presentation Gray better understood the values of this process and absorbed nuance after nuance that reinforced the concepts of maneuver warfare, Sun Tzu, and their possible application to the Marine Corps.

It was Colonel Wyly who introduced John Boyd to General Gray. Wyly, who was highly motivated by his two combat tours in Vietnam, was the officer in charge of running the Amphibious War Fighting School at Quantico, Virginia. This was a key assignment for the movement's growth and development. It was there Wyly permeated his maneuver warfare methodology throughout the captaincy level—fertile ground for future Marine Corps leadership. More than anything, his efforts were focused on making the Corps more proficient at its job of warfighting, while offering Marines a better military toolbox for their survival and success in all forms of combat.[16]

Colonel Wyly admitted that if he was ever given the opportunity to better the abilities of his Marines in combat he would be on the front lines of this effort. As he put it, he would "Stand up and be counted!" He was also deeply influenced by the death of Chip Pilkington, one of his subordinates in Vietnam. "For this change, I know what I don't want," explained Wyly, "and I will find a better way for the Marine Corps." This was his way of honoring a dedicated

15 John Boyd, "*Patterns of Conflict*" and "*Discourse on Winning and Losing*" (unpublished: from the personal papers of Col. Pat Garvey).

16 Gray and Wyly, interview with the author.

young Marine lieutenant who gave his life for country and Corps in Southeast Asia. As luck would have it, Colonel Wyly got his opportunity.[17]

Although approaching the end of his career as a colonel of Marines, and with no apparent support from his immediate senior officers, Wyly began what became known as the "basement seminars—discussions among independent "free thinkers" within the Corps. In Wyly's mind, he knew what was wrong with the current Vietnam-era Marine Corps Way of War. He wasn't sure what would make it better, however, until he discovered the precepts of the German Way of War while attending George Washington University Graduate School (which would soon be mixed with Boyd's philosophical tenets as they applied to maneuver warfare). Something needed to be done, and the philosophical aspects that gave the German military the proverbial leg-up and early successes in World War II warranted further study and possible adoption by the Corps. Colonel Wyly's academic foundation was also in the area of European history, with a focus on the German military.[18]

The 2nd Marine Division Maneuver Warfare Manual was compiled by members of what Gen. Gray dubbed the "Maneuver Warfare Board," which, before presenting itself to Gray called itself the "Maneuver Warfare Study Group." Bill Woods, G. I. Wilson, John Schmidt, and other key members, all officers ranging from captain through Lieutenant Colonel, decided on their own to start compiling their ideas in writing. This initiative was not General Gray's but their own. What they appreciated was the long leash Gray gave them. Gray himself often referred to what was going on as "free thinking."[19]

Gray was not tied to the term "Maneuver Warfare," however, even though he did give that name to the Board. What he wanted them to do more than anything was think freely! And that they surely did. When interviewed about this, Bill Woods explained how General Gray used the term "free-thinking tactics" more than he did "maneuver warfare tactics." Woods also affirmed that

17 Michael Wyly, "Re: Maneuver Warfare USMC," e-mail message to author, January 14, 2014.

18 Wyly, interview with the author.

19 This was an unpublished document, " *USMC Maneuver Warfare Manual, 2nd Marine Division, 1985*," by authorization of Major General A. M. Gray, CO: compiled by G. I. Wilson, Bill Woods and others, received from the private files of G. I Wilson, January, 2014; Wyly and Woods, interviews with the author.

neither Boyd nor Woods was enamored with the "maneuver warfare" term, either.[20]

The maneuver warfare notes, which were eventually referred to as a "manual," were written by MW Board members according to their military occupation specialties. Woods wrote both the infantry and reconnaissance portions. There were also segments on artillery, tanks, logistics (by Captain Denny Long), and so forth. In October 1982, the project was passed to Woods' successors. General Gray never wrote any of the manual nor did he edit or oversee any of it. After all, he wanted "free thinking" and that's what he got. The book was the brainchild of the "evolutionary" captains.[21]

This seminal work far exceeds anything that was later published by the Marine Corps. The work was the key to understanding how to implement maneuver warfare. The emphasis was that there are many actual tactics, and the choice of implementation is guided by the commander's intent (Mission Orders). When combined with Boyd's *Patterns of Conflict*, and with the proviso that there are no set formulae, the captains and majors must make choices that are bracketed by the fluid situations in front of them so as to achieve success in regards to the commander's intent.[22]

Very early in the formative days of Marine Corps maneuver warfare, and just after the partial institutionalization of it by the 2nd MARDIV, an international incident prompted President Reagan to use military force to quell a Caribbean crisis. The situation required the rescue of American citizens caught in the middle of a Grenadian *coup d'état*.

20 Wyly email, March 2014, and interview with the author. Bill Lind had coined the phrase and used it consistently. Any negative connotations associated with "maneuver warfare" were more directed at the messenger than the content. Lind had managed to alienate most of the senior leadership within the Marine Corps because of his caustic and perceived abusive behavior of those he lectured while introducing maneuver warfare principles. Lind proved to be his own worst enemy while selling these ideas to most of the professional warfighters. Because he had never been in the military, he was perceived as having no standing in this arena. Other academics, such as Martin van Creveld, fared better with acceptance because of their less-than-condescending approach. Lind, interview with the author; Conway and Kelly,interviews with the author. Also see Trainor email dated August 4, 2012; Garvey, interview with the author.

21 "Maneuver Warfare Manual," G. I. Wilson archives and personal papers. Woods served in the division and on the board from June 1981 through October 1982. When he left, he considered the manual to be an unfinished product.

22 Wyly, interview with the author.

The Grenada operation (Operation Urgent Fury) was launched just two days after the Marines suffered their highest single-day death toll since World War II in Beirut, Lebanon. Of special significance is that the Marine Corps' commander for this operation, Ray Smith, was an early supporter of maneuver warfare. "To me, at least, the real issue was that your mindset should be to know as much as you can about the enemy and to, as much as possible, attack him where he is weakest, not where he is strongest," explained then-Lieutenant Colonel Smith. "I personally came to the deep conviction that attacking the enemy in his weakness occurred in his mind as much as much as in his body. . . . Less waste of your own resources for sure, less carnage on your own part and less carnage to them. . . . The greater likelihood of prisoners versus KIA's or surrender versus slaughter is without question the root of the argument in support of the maneuver argument for me."[23]

Operation Urgent Fury was a joint operation shared by the Army's 82nd Airborne and the Marine Corps' Battalion Landing Team 2/8, 22 Marine Amphibious Unit, Fleet Marine Force Atlantic. At this point in the history of the American military, the Army was still deeply entrenched in the attritionist doctrine. The Marine units from Camp Lejeune had begun to invest themselves into the concepts of maneuver warfare. No better single quote describes the overall difference between the Army and Marine attacking forces in Grenada than this: "We've got 6,000 soldiers sitting on their ass in the airport, two companies of Marines running rampant over two-thirds of the island. What the [expletive deleted] is going on?"[24]

This experience was the first inkling that the use of maneuver warfare offered much more to the American warfighter in general than the attritional doctrines of the past. In response to a question, whether he was following mission-type orders, Major General Smith replied, "I didn't have any commander's intent from anyone above me. No one above me had adopted or utilized the commander's intent concept at that time. . . . It was my command's intent, not anybody above me."[25]

23 Smith, telephone interview with the author.

24 Otto Kreisher, "Operation URGENT FURY–Grenada," *Leatherneck Magazine,* October 8, 2013; www.mca-marines.org/leatherneck/2013/10/urgent-fury-grenada, last accessed January 20, 2014.

25 Smith, telephone interview with the author.

In other words, Smith had the chance to put into practice the first modern maneuver warfare application for the Marine Corps under what appeared to be hostile conditions. Smith expounded on this situation:

> So my premise was that we would achieve complete surprise in terms of operational [art]. it would be a complete surprise. We may not have achieved tactical surprise but we deployed with complete surprise and that the faster we could overwhelm the terrain and the people on it, the better it would be. So my commander's intent was to have at least a fire team on every intersection in our zone within the first 24 hours. Get there fast. Straight out get there fast because we were going….. Be a complete surprise and once we were there, we would dominate them, which we did…the secret to our rapid success was the fact that we went in with the idea that speed alone would make all the difference.[26]

In doctrinal terms, the Army was doomed from the start in this operation, continued Smith:

> The 82nd Airborne, the most agile, mobile element of the United States Army at that time, was gathered on the airfield and getting organized for two brigades. . . . A frontal attack on the highest piece of ground in Grenada with two brigades abreast. They spent a couple of days prepping to do that in spite of the fact that we [Marines 2/8 BLT] were already there and in place. . . . The 82nd were building up and preparing for two brigades abreast attack on a piece of high ground . . . already owned by the Marine Corps.

Intelligence of what was happening on Grenada was sketchy at best, and completely wrong at worst.[27]

While Smith deployed his assets he also began working with the local populace to garner intelligence. In the best spirit of Marine Corps "Small Wars," he identified those members of the local militia who posed the real threat to Grenada. His chief source of intelligence was a local woman named "Mama." She and some of the other Grenadians [Keith Carter and Biko Renwick] began to identify the militia and Smith began to capture them. "Mama" described them as "Thugs . . . . The battalion that was the [Grenadian]

26 Ibid.

27 Ibid.

active army which was also the [political] party, it was everything." As General Smith recalled, she explained that "These thugs have put on their civilian clothes and they're walking right through you guys and when you leave, they will come back out and we will all pay the price for that. You need to get these people and get them off our island." Smith asked if she would identify them. "Mama" agreed.

In the process, the 2/8 BLT captured Major Gillespie, the operations officer for the People's Revolutionary Army. Gillespie was well-educated, well-trained, and had had a diplomatic tour as the Grenadian Defense Attaché in Cuba. During a debriefing of Major Gillespie, a map was found with him that provided the Grenadian military/militia field dispositions. Under questioning he updated it to the man. General Smith later recalled that by the time he ended up going into the second island of Carricou, he had a list of the names of all of the PRA members on both islands. It identified which were also members of the party down to the detail of fire team breakdowns. According to Smith, "We had complete freedom of maneuver in our zone. We even had the locals deliver the militia's weapons to the 2/8 BLT staging area at the race track." Then, as Major Gillespie started getting more cooperative, Gen. Smith recounted he said the following:

> We [Gillespie] did not expect you to land at Pearls. We thought you would land at Grand Ance Beach which is where the university was. Grand Ance Beach is the curve of beach that is between the city of St. George and Salinas Airfield. The main campus of that medical school is the Grand Ance Campus. That's where they thought we would land, and according to Gillespie: "We thought if you did anything you would land at Grand Ance Beach and we were prepared to fight you there." And I suspect they would have. "We did not expect you to land at Pearl and then we were unprepared for the speed of your movement, and you appeared at places we did not expect you to be and others. And as I told my high command last night, we had no choice but to go into hiding until you left." And that's what Major Gillespie told me of the Grenadian reactions to 2/8 BLT's maneuver warfare actions.[28]

28 Ibid.

Major General Smith went on:

> Obviously the heart and soul of what we called maneuver warfare is trust in your subordinates. If you're really going to exploit somebody's success, one, that junior officer has got to tell you, and two, you've got to believe him and have enough trust in him to connect your forces to follow him. That's almost the heart of the maneuver warfare idea, or as I interpreted it. To me, the real essence of maneuver warfare is that the commander gets a call from an unexpected subordinate saying, "Christ, I'm behind "xyz" I've got a wide open gap to go past "xyz". . . . And the essence of maneuver warfare is for the commander to one, get that report, two, believe in it, and three, commit his main effort behind it. You can't do that if you don't have a cohesive unit and you need to have trust and confidence in each other. Unit cohesiveness is absolutely essential if you're going to exercise maneuver warfare. Period! If you don't have cohesive units, then maneuver warfare is not a viable operational philosophy.[29]

It is at this point that one must recognize that the simple aspects of commander's intent, mission orders, subordinated trust, recce pull against gaps, rapid tempo and unit cohesion are the building blocks of Marine Corps maneuver warfare prosecuted by then-Lieutenant Colonel Smith.

Bill Lind praised Major General Ray Smith:

> They [USMC Battalion Landing Team 2/8, 22 Marine Amphibious Unit] did not follow a rigid plan but rather adapted swiftly to circumstances as they changed. The speed with which the Marines acted and moved decisively, for example the surrender of the Grenadian platoon that surrendered rather than fight because your forces appear where they were not expected, this convinced the Grenadian high command that resistance was hopeless. Therefore, this is the best possible outcome of winning [using the tenets of maneuver warfare] without a fight.[30]

According to Smith, the Lind quote is in essence a paraphrase of what their operations officer had told him.

29 Smith, telephone interview with the author.

30 Lind, interview with the author.

Chapter 4

The USMC in Desert Shield and Desert Storm

Part 1: Saddam Hussein Meets General Al Gray's Legacy

It is now more than 25 years since Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in August 1990, and the U.S.-led coalition moved in to stop further aggression and eject the Iraqis from the small oil-rich nation. The war marked the first time the United States openly and directly sent major land forces to fight in the Persian Gulf. The success of these endeavors renewed the assertiveness and confidence of the U.S. military and its projected foreign policy in the Middle East. The Marine Corps played a significant role in these operations, demonstrating a use of maneuver warfare to shape its battlespace that would in effect become the Marine Corps Way of War.

Following Saddam Hussein's surprise invasion, the United States established a coalition of nations to defend Saudi Arabia and potentially other Gulf states from further Iraqi aggression, as well as to rid Kuwait of the Iraqi military takeover. These operations are generally known today as "Gulf War I." The mission was twofold: protect Saudi Arabia (Operation Desert Shield) and expel Iraqi military forces from Kuwait (Desert Storm). This was the largest deployment of Marines since the Vietnam War, and the Corps' new doctrinal philosophy of maneuver warfare played a significant role in the success of these operations.

The Marine Corps focused on the key tenets found in the newly published Fleet Marine Force Manual 1 (FMFM-1) *Warfighting* and FMFM 1-1 *Campaigning*.[1] In particular, the following areas were the main focus of efforts (*Schwerpunkt*)[2] for the Marine Corps' inaugural maneuver warfare applications:

1. Maritime Prepositioning Ships;
2. Shaping the battlefield:
   A. Electronically
   B. Physically
   C. Psychologically
3. Feints that identified gaps and surfaces;
4. Maneuver warfare logistical support.

As a general frame of reference for the Marine Corps' actions in Gulf War I, the following chronology hits the milestones that were significant in the operational aspects, and of the mission orders as they unfolded on the battlespaces in Kuwait and Iraq.

Chronology of major events and milestones for Desert Shield and Desert Storm[3]

August 2, 1990: The elite Iraqi Republican Guard crossed into Kuwait and began a two-pronged action to gain control of the tiny oil rich kingdom. After breaching the border, the Guard divisions began converging on the capital of Kuwait City, coordinating their movements with a partly helicopter-borne,

1 Marine Corps, *Warfighting,* Fleet Marine Force Manual 1(FMFM 1) PCN 139 000050 00, March 6, 1989; Marine Corps, *Campaigning,* Fleet Marine Force Manual 1-1 (FMFM1-1) PCN 139 000060 00, January 25, 1990.

2 German maneuver warfare jargon infused into the Marine Corps' evolutionary learning process. "Schwerpunkt" means the center of gravity or main focus of an attack.

3 Multiple sources were used to gather the facts and details of specific battles and actions taken by the Marine Corps, including: Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor, *The Generals' War* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1996), 164, 174-175, 271, 355-374,346-350, Edwin Simmons, *US Marines: A History* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2003), 286-311, and Major Charles D. Melson, USMC (Ret.), et. al., *U. S. Marines in the Persian Gulf, 1990-1991: Anthology and Annotated Bibliography*, www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/usmchist/gulf.txt, accessed May 15, 2014, 231-237.

division-sized unit of special operations troops. The forces linked up and by nightfall Iraqi forces had fully captured Kuwait and its capital. Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein had been making numerous threats against Kuwait, but the actual invasion and its magnitude caught the world by surprise. Iraq had waged a full-scale war with its neighbor Iran from 1980 to 1988, and the general consensus was that the Iraqi army was a well-equipped, battle-hardened force.

For the United States, the first priority became the defense of Saudi Arabia. The disruption of Kuwaiti oil was inflicting losses on the global economy, and the prospect of a disruption of Saudi oil threatened to be disastrous for the West. The Saudis concurred with President George H. W. Bush that the threat was indeed grave, and Saudi leaders overcame their usual national antipathy at allowing foreign troops into the kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

August 7, 1990: President Bush ordered U.S. military aircraft and troops to Saudi Arabia as part of a multinational force to defend that country against possible Iraqi invasion. The largest overseas deployment in decades, Operation Desert Shield called for major units from all four U.S. services. The initial force consisted of two F–15 squadrons, including the Maritime Prepositioned Squadrons 2 and 3 based on the islands of Diego Garcia and Guam; two carrier battle groups; a brigade of the 82nd Airborne Division, and the I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF), as well as an airborne warning and control system unit.

Under the direction of President Bush, Secretary of Defense Richard B. Cheney unleashed the most concentrated and complex projection of the American military power since World War II. Prior to full U.S. deployment, Cheney sought the council of Col. John Boyd to formulate the overall war plan. Boyd had three to four classified sessions with Cheney which, in the estimate of his biographer Robert Coram, set the tone for the use of maneuver warfare for Gulf War I.[4]

The initial mission of these forces was aimed at protecting Saudi Arabia and its oil fields from Iraq, as well as preventing Iraqi aggression into other parts of the region. This would eventually lead to the removal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait. The Marine Corps' institutionalized maneuver warfare doctrine was put to its first real test in the modern battlespace against what appeared to be a battle-hardened Iraqi army of half a million soldiers.

4 Coram, *Boyd,* 422-425.

August 8, 1990: Major General Walter E. Boomer was promoted to lieutenant general and assigned Commanding General of I Marine Expeditionary Force.

August 15, 1990: Headquarters, Marine Corps announced the commitment of 45,000 troops to the Persian Gulf area. This deployment consisted of elements of the I MEF including units from 1st Marine Division and 1st Force Service Support Group (FSSG), 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing (MAW), and the 7th Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB). Also en route were elements of the 4th MEB including units from 2nd Marine Division, 2nd FSSG, and the 2nd MAW. The Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron 2 (MPS-2) was dispatched from its normal anchorage at Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean with enough supplies to sustain the initial 16,500-man expeditionary force for 30 days.

August 31, 1990: By this date, the Corps had deployed approximately one-half of the required 92,000 Marines to Southwest Asia. At full strength, this would include 21 helicopter squadrons, 24 infantry battalions, 19 fixed-wing squadrons, and the associated command elements, combat forces, and combat service support organizations. These forces were required to support a Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) afloat in the Persian Gulf and a Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) ashore on the Arabian Peninsula, and two Marine Expeditionary Brigades (MEB) consisting of the 1st and 2nd Marine Divisions (MARDIVs), the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing (MAW), and the 1st Force Service Support Group (FSSG) that was ashore in Saudi Arabia. Also afloat with the Marine forces were the 4th MEB, the 5th MEB with the 11th MEU embedded, and the 13th MEU.

The buildup of the Marine forces validated the Corps' maritime force concept, with the Marines falling in on the equipment from the three Maritime Prepositioning Squadrons (MPS).[5] This provided the first credible ground defense capability in that area after the invasion of Kuwait. Prepositioning military assets by the Marine Corps is a vital aspect of maneuver warfare. The logistical tail required supplying, it supported ground forces, and it aided in the shaping of the battlefield prior to any engagement.

September 26, 1990: While touring Marine positions in Saudi Arabia and meeting with officials from Persian Gulf nations, General Alfred M. Gray, Commandant of the Marine Corps, addressed a detachment of Marines. He talked about a variety of topics ranging from relations with Arab countries to

5 Melson, *U. S. Marines in the Persian Gulf, 1990-1991*, 22.

unit rotations, and challenged Marines to continue to do their jobs in the best way they knew how. It was the first visit to the Middle East during Operation Desert Shield for the 29th Commandant.

November 8, 1990: President Bush announced that he planned to add more than 200,000 U.S. troops to those already deployed in Operation Desert Shield. This signaled the United States would not remain in a defensive posture in that theater, but would adopt a potentially offensive demeanor. When completed, this deployment doubled the number of Marines in the objective area, adding II Marine Expeditionary Force units from the Corps' east coast bases and the 5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade from California.

November 15-21, 1990: About 100 miles south of the Kuwait border, American and Saudi Arabian military forces participated in Exercise Imminent Thunder. The exercise included an amphibious landing by more than 1,000 Marines of the 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade and tested the military's ability to command, control, and coordinate air and ground forces. It included air-to-air mock fighter combat and close air support of ground forces. At the same time, only 25 miles south of Kuwait, another 1,000 Marines from the 1st MEB conducted field exercises ashore.

December 10, 1990: More than 24,000 Marines of the II MEF mustered on the parade ground at Camp Lejeune, NC, for a pre-deployment review by the Commandant of the Marine Corps and the Commander in Chief, Atlantic Fleet, in the largest formation of Marines in modern history.

January 12, 1991: After three days of debate, Congress voted President Bush the authority to go to war against Iraq.

January 15, 1991: The V Marine Expeditionary Force (V MEF) was activated to assume missions and tasks assigned to I MEF prior to its deployment to the Persian Gulf. V MEF was to form, train, and deploy units to reinforce and replace those employed in the region.

January 16, 1991: Operation Desert Shield became Operation Desert Storm when forces of the allied coalition launched an all-out air assault against targets in Iraq and occupied Kuwait in an effort to liberate Kuwait and enforce the resolutions passed by the United Nations Security Council.

January 29, 1991: The first serious ground fighting of Operation Desert Storm broke out when Iraqi troops mounted an attack into Saudi Arabia along a 40-mile front. Company and battalion-sized Iraqi units centered their efforts on Khafji, a deserted port city six miles south of the border. Saudi and Qatari troops, supported by artillery and attack helicopters from the 1st Marine Division and aircraft from the anti-Iraq coalition recaptured the town two days

later. The Battle of Khafji was the first major ground combat action of Gulf War I.

February 5, 1991: The Secretary of the Navy authorized the involuntary recall of up to 2,000 retired Marines who had completed at least 20 years of active duty and who were under the age of 60. The retirees were to be retained on active duty for as long as deemed necessary.

February 13, 1991: By this date the allied air forces had flown more than 65,000 sorties in Iraq and Kuwait. A total of 28 planes had been lost in combat—19 from the United States and nine from allied forces. Of the U.S. planes, four were Marine Corps aircraft—three AV-8B Harriers and one OV-10 Bronco. Marine artillery units, using 155mm towed and 8-inch self-propelled howitzers staged a series of nighttime artillery raids over the heavily defended border of Kuwait.

February 15, 1991: Allied commanders estimated that 30 percent of Iraq's tank force, 35 percent of its artillery, and 27 percent of its other armored vehicles in the Kuwaiti theater of operations had been destroyed. Lt. Gen. Boomer issued his thoughts in his step-off letter to the 1st MARDIV:

> After months of preparation, we are on the eve of the liberation of Kuwait, a small, peaceful country that was brutally attacked and subsequently pillaged by Iraq. Now we will attack into Kuwait, not to conquer, but to drive out the invaders and restore the country to its citizens. In so doing, you not only return a nation to its people, but you will destroy the war machine of a ruthless dictator, who fully intended to control this part of the world, thereby endangering many other nations, including our own. We will succeed in our mission because we are well-trained and well-equipped; because we are U.S. Marines, Sailors, Soldiers, and Airmen: and because our cause is just. Your children and grandchildren will read about your victory in the years to come and appreciate your sacrifice and courage. America will watch her sons and daughters and draw strength from your success. May the spirit of your Marine forefathers ride with you and may God give you the strength to accomplish your mission.
>
> Semper Fi.
> Boomer[6]

6 General Walt Boomer USMC, letter to I MEF, February 23, 1991, in Melson, *U. S. Marines in the Persian Gulf, 1990-1991*, 46.

February 24, 1991: The I Marine Expeditionary Force and coalition forces began a ground assault on Iraqi defenses in the final chapter of Operation Desert Storm. Located just south of the Kuwaiti border along the Persian Gulf, the 1st and 2nd Marine Divisions with their four main task forces—Ripper, Papa Bear, Taro, and Grizzly—stormed into the teeth of Iraqi defenses and by doing so convinced the defenders it was the main effort of attack. Meanwhile,

heavily armored allied forces made a long left-hook through the desert to attack Iraqi defenses in Kuwait from behind. At the same time, units of the 4th and 5th Marine Expeditionary Brigades, afloat in the Persian Gulf, pinned down large numbers of Iraqi troops expecting an amphibious assault.[7]

February 28, 1991: *Operation Desert Storm* ended when the ceasefire declared by President George Bush went into effect. In less than 100 hours, U.S. and allied forces defeated the Iraqi Army. The I Marine Expeditionary Force fielded 92,990 men, making Operation Desert Storm the largest Marine Corps operation in history.

Part 2: Major General Myatt and the 1st Marine Division

Two quotes help us understand the Marine Corps' initial adoption of maneuver warfare and the mindset created by the "evolutionists" responsible for the Corps' institutionalization of the new doctrine:

> Remember, maneuver warfare to me is a way of life. . . . And if you think that way, you're always [ready], it's a six-hour planning cycle. It's the anticipating. It's we're going to be ready to go. And I think that's the strength of our Marine Corps."[8]

And:

> War is not about physics, or pounds of steel, or targets. It's mental... It is two opponents trying to out-think each other. He's [General Gray] said to me something that I've never forgotten—it's that it's good to trick the enemy.... There's nothing against the law about tricking your opponent. . . . And the whole idea of deception. And every time you think of your opponent—he actually talked about "the dark alley warrior." . . . Have you ever been in a dark alley and not known who's there but you got somebody behind you that makes you uncomfortable? . . . The dark alley warrior is always thinking about making his opponent uncomfortable, and if you can make him or her so uncomfortable that they quit the battlefield without firing a shot, that's kind of what Sun Tzu said. . . . Like in wrestling, we talk about certain leverage to put your opponent at a disadvantage. Little guys sometimes can pin much larger guys because they're good at that and that's how General Gray thought. He called it "fighting

7 Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals' War*, 346-367.

8 Myatt, interview with the author.

> smarter." And he says we really need to be thinking rather than just fighting. The most valuable weapon we have is the brain. The thinking warrior is always trying to figure out how you're going to trick the enemy, how you're going to put your opponent at a disadvantage—the dark alley warrior, make him uncomfortable."
>
> Major General Mike Myatt[9]

According to the Marine Corps' *Warfighting*[10] manual, maneuver warfare is a philosophy that seeks to shatter the enemy's cohesion through a sequence of rapid, unexpected, and violent actions that create a rapidly deteriorating and turbulent situation for the enemy with which they cannot long cope. It is plainly evident that all of the Marine Corps actions during the Persian Gulf conflict fit this definition. In essence, there are four separate aspects that exemplify the new doctrine initiated fifteen years before this massive Marine Corps military action.

On February 24, 1991, the 1st Marine Division entered south Kuwait to begin the ground offensive aimed at ending Iraqi occupation. The successful breach of the first obstacle belt triggered a timed sequence of attacks by the coalition forces arrayed along the northern border of Saudi Arabia. The 1st Marine Division attack came on the heels of 38 days of allied air attacks. The ground offensive swept almost everything in a nearly bloodless campaign. General Boomer, commanding general of I Marine Expeditionary Force, selected the 1st Marine Division to lead the attack. The division had been in the field since the advent of Operation Desert Shield and its units had many months in the desert to train and rehearse for the upcoming ground war against the Iraqi Army.[11]

The next day, February 25—the second day of ground combat—the I MEF continued advancing in the face of moderate resistance. The 1st MARDIV began on a line forward of the Burgan oil field. An immediate response to a division artillery time-on-target fire mission targeted suspected enemy assembly areas and enemy armor. Close-quarters battle ensued and played out involving all elements of the division, which finally prepared and consolidated

9 Myatt, interview with the author.

10 FMFM-1, 77.

11 Myatt, interview with the author.

to clear the enemy from the Al Jaber airfield. The 1st MARDIV captured more than 2,000 prisoners and destroyed 18 tanks and some 100 other vehicles.

The Marines of 1st MARDIV under the command of General Myatt were physically, professionally, and psychologically ready because of the Marine Corps' maneuver warfare philosophy. After the start of hostilities, the 1st MARDIV had the chance to prove its capabilities in a series of deception operations, artillery raids, screening operations, and combined arms raids that put the division in place to become the first unit to carry the ground war directly to the Iraqi army.[12]

The Area of Operational Responsibility (AOR) border provided many ambiguous operations and/or artillery raids designed as part of the Marine Corps' shaping of the battlefield. The I MEF deception aimed at confusing the Iraqis as to the intentions and position of the allied forces. There were a dozen combined-arms artillery raids. January 21-22, 1991 witnessed the first raid, an attempt to silence an Iraqi Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) battery positioned near Khafji. The subsequent raids took place on the 26th and the 28th of January, and then on 1st, 2nd, 4th, 8th, 9th, 11th, 19th, 20th and finally, the 22nd of February.[13]

The preparations of the raids began 24-48 hours prior, with a raid force planning cell formed to develop the support and targeting requirements. The division selected a target and then requested air support while the raid force was planning the assembly areas, tentative firing positions, routes, and checkpoints. During the raid, the raid force would depart in sufficient time for all the elements to be in their firing positions by nightfall. Immediately when the raid commander declared "ready to fire!" and the air support and airborne forward air controllers were on station, the battery fired on the designated targets and then withdrew under the covering fire from the support battery. The Iraqis were confronted by Marine defense of the border posts and began retreating back to Kuwait after the dawn engagement with Company A, which brought the Iraqis under fire. For a few hours the Marine companies called in artillery and air strikes on the withdrawing Iraqis.[14]

The Iraqi air force remained grounded, leaving their ground attacks without The benefit of air cover. The unsupported assaults did not put the

12 Myatt, interview with the author.

13 Ibid.

14 Myatt, interview with the author.

Marines under pressure or force the division to reveal the tactical deployment of its units. Generals Keys, Boomer, and Myatt saw the attack as a positive event because it influenced the planning for the allied offensive.[15]

It turned out the Iraqi soldiers were poorly trained, poorly led, and unmotivated. The Iraqi defenses were not as formidable as the Marines originally believed. The attack showed the American commanders there was a gap in the air surveillance of the battlefield sufficient to allow a sizable armored force to move to the border without being detected; the gap was immediately pressed. The Marine Corps was exposing the gaps and general weaknesses they would exploit via maneuver warfare.[16]

General Myatt discussed the effects of the initial reconnaissance pulls and probes prior to G-Day:

> What we had was Iraqi Artillery positions. . . . Exact coordinates. There would be a battalion of artillery. They had 1,200 artillery pieces in the Iraqi's front lines facing us and combined between the First and Second Division the Marines had 240 artillery pieces. The Marines' heavy artillery is mobile and since we knew where they were at night—and remember, we're still back here closer to Iraq than we were to Kuwait, but we moved up closer and we would take a battery of self-propelled artillery—we still have self-propelled—the battalion commander . . . would take the battery of his self-propelled artillery, we gave him a light armored infantry company for security in the LAI and in that task force we would have what we called a Rat Pack, a pack of techies and that kind of worked as our jammers. Because when it started, the Iraqi's had three different kind of ground surveillance radar. They could see us and if they could see us moving, they would shoot at our positions. . . . So, we would take the EA6B's and we were jamming Iraqi radar, they would move up to some pre-known position, fire artillery, if you know exactly where you are and know exactly where the target is, you get almost first round capability most of the time.
>
> So, with GPS you know exactly where you are and the EA6B's would tell us exactly where the Iraqi artillery was. So, we take that battery of artillery up there and we would be jamming the radar. They didn't know where we were. And then we would fire a battery of six on that Iraqi artillery position and then we would tear off in to the

15 Keys and Myatt, interviews with the author.

16 Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals' War*, 104-105; Keys interview with the author supports this citation.

night and as the jammer and as these people started leaving, the Iraqi's would pick them up on their radar, then the Iraqis would start firing at them and we would have an airborne assault... as soon as they saw the Iraqi artillery flashes firing at us, they would then eliminate them. Why is that important? Because then we know the guns were manned. We did this, I think, six or seven different ways and what we were trying to achieve was screwing with their minds that whenever they heard Marine artillery they would hunker down rather than return fire . . . and it worked.[17]

On February 21 (G minus 3), all the elements of the 1st Marine Division had already completed their movement to attack positions on the opposite side of the Saudi berm. Each task force began immediate reconnaissance and screening actions upon arrival at their sectors. Within hours, the forward observers called in air and artillery strikes on the nearby Iraqi units.[18]

The I Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF), II MEF, and the amphibious forces poised to launch a beach landing, deceiving the Iraqis with regard to their place of attack as well as in psychological operations that affected the enemy's will to resist. The coalition elements moved quicker against the Iraqi army than they had expected possible. The Iraqis were caught off-balance with no opportunity to respond effectively to the Marine Corps' subsequent actions in the Kuwaiti Area of Operational Responsibility (KAOR). By the use of rapid maneuver and superior firepower support, the division threatened the Iraqi commanders with encirclement of Kuwait City and Al Jahrah. When the Iraqis tried to escape, their fleeing movement was turned into a rout by the Marine Corps' timely and decisive actions.

The Marines of the 7th Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) had begun arriving in Saudi Arabia by late August 1990, accompanied by equipment and other personnel of I MEF: the First Force Service Support Group; the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing; and the 1st Marine Division. The Marines were reinforced by units from the III MEF as well as the 4th MAW and 4th MARDIV (reservists) and other individual augmenters and Marine Corps Reserve elements.

* * *

17 Myatt, interview with the author.

18 Ibid.

In less than 100 hours, the allied forces and the U.S. military defeated the Iraqi Army in Kuwait and on its own soil—a decisive victory with very few American casualties. The Marine Corps accomplished its missions in hours, not the many days the planners believed would be necessary. The unit commanders of the 1st MARDIV and 2nd MARDIV attribute their rapid success to the tenets found and utilized in FMFM-1 Warfighting. Gulf War I provided a medium to study and improve the abilities of its Marines to integrate combined arms with the other services in various joint operations while utilizing its new or rather, codified and institutional "renewed," philosophy of the Marine Corps' maneuver warfare applications.[19]

As noted, Operation Desert Storm began January 16, 1991, and was marked by the initiation of the air campaign launched against the Iraqi forces occupying Kuwait. By the end of August 1990, the Corps had deployed approximately one-half of the 92,000 Marines to the Persian Gulf region. At full strength, this included 21 helicopter squadrons, 24 infantry battalions, 19 fixed-wing and associated command elements, combat service support organizations and combat support. These forces were required to support a Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) afloat in the Persian Gulf and Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) ashore on the Arabian Peninsula, and two Marine Expeditionary Brigades (MEB) consisting of 1st and 2nd Marine Divisions, the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing (MAW), and the 1st Force Service Support Group (FSSG) that was ashore in Saudi Arabia. Also afloat with the Marine Corps forces were the 4th MEB, the 5th MEB with the 11th MEU embedded, and the 13th MEU in reserve. The buildup of the Marine forces validated the Marines' Maritime Force (MPF) concept, with the Marines falling in on the equipment from the three maritime prepositioning squadrons (MPS). The idea of prepositioning military assets is a vital aspect of maneuver warfare in that the logistical tail required supplying, supporting ground forces and aids in the shaping of the battlefield prior to any engagement.[20]

On January 15, 1991, the Marine forces were preparing for imminent combat. The reinforcement numbers that had been directed by the president had been long accomplished with the closure of the additional forces from the

19 Wilson, interview with the author; John Schmidt, Re: "Maneuver Warfare," e-mail message to author, November 21, 2013.

20 Melson, *U.S. Marines in the Persian Gulf: 1990–1991,"* 22; Charles C. Krulak, *Operational Maneuver from the Sea: A White Paper* (Washington, DC: HQUSMC, PCN 145 00000100, January 1996), 12.

II MEF from North Carolina, as well as the arrival of the 5th MEB from southern California. The I MEF command post had moved to Safaniya and the 1st MARDIV was positioned around the northeast portion of the MARCENT AOR. The 1st FSSG established forward supply bases at Kibrit and Ra's al Mish'ab while continuing the offload at Al Jubayl. The 2nd MARDIV occupied the northwest portion of the AOR. The 3rd MAW supported I MEF, which provided a 24-hour combat air patrol station F/A-18's, and was moving its tactical air control facilities north to Al Mish'ab. The 4th MEB afloat had completed highly publicized amphibious exercises while in Saudi Arabia, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates, and was strategically located to affect an amphibious invasion of Kuwait. I MEF was under the command of General Myatt.[21]

The Marine Air-Ground Forces (MAGTF) was deployed around the world and was not limited to amphibious operations only. They were capable of projecting sustained, as well as combined-arms, combat power ashore and so could conduct a wide range of missions. MAGTF is essential to the protection of national security interests, as well as the projection of power that may be required by the Marine Corps in our post-Cold War environment. The other card General Gray played focused on the use of maneuver-style doctrine and tactics. This in itself would play out better than expected.[22]

"An organization that's got decentralized decision-making that doesn't have a common understanding of the commander's intent can actually come apart at the seams," explained General Myatt, who went on to explain the overall thinking of the Corps as it applied to Desert Storm. "An organization that's got decentralized decision-making that doesn't have a common understanding of the commander's intent can actually come apart at the seams," explained General Myatt. "Orientation—making the decision once you observe what the enemy is doing, then you orient yourself, you orient your command, you make the decision to interact as fast as you can. The orientation—you have to have a common understanding of the commander's intent. So what we did in the Gulf War," he continued, "getting ready to go into

21 Myatt and Keys, interviews with the author; Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals' War*, 276.

22 General Robert Magnus, ACMC USMC (ret.), telephone interview with the author, September 27, 2011. Also note reference to Boyd's OODA loop approach to this battle space.

Kuwait, is that we spent hours making sure everybody understood the commander's intent.[23]

Operation Desert Shield was executed as planned by the Marine Corps, with the 1st and 7th Marine Expeditionary brigades deployed by air, taking little with them but their individual equipment and arms. (It was expected their heavy supplies and equipment would be brought to the AOR by the Maritime Prepositioning Force) Each squadron was loaded with 30 days of supplies and most of the MEBs' combat equipment. Thirteen preloaded ships, together with civilian crews were eventually dedicated to this deployment. These ships were not a substitute for the amphibious ships, but instead provided an enhanced and sustainable assault capability.

General Myatt added the following insight, which puts the Maritime Prepositioning Squadrons in proper perspective:

> The Army lands with about ten rounds of ammunition and three days of rations. They come in, in late August, we're in mid-August and over here are the MEF ships. All the Marines gear on it, ammunition, fuel, equipment to make water and all that. The Army is back here, 82nd Airborne, they're back in the rear. They were going into Jubal the third day there and trying to buy fast food because they were running out of food. They don't have much ammunition. These MEF stores fed all the Marines, the 24th MEF and the 82nd Airborne and then the 101st when they came in until they could get their own logistic chain going. The MPF ships were the thing that was a godsend.[24]

Part 3: Lt. General Keys and the II Marine Division

On the East Coast, the II MEF, which consisted essentially of the 2nd Force Service Support Group and the 2nd Marine Division, was based at Camp Lejeune. The 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing was based at North Carolina's Marine Corps Air Station in Cherry Point. The II MEF called itself the "Carolina MAGTF." They bore the imprint of General Gray's time as the Commanding General of the 2nd Marine Division from 1981 to 1984, and the Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic (FMFLANT) from 1984 to 1987. On December 9, the movement of the fly-in echelon (FIE) began and was set to continue until January 15 at the rate of approximately 1,000 Marines per day.

23 Myatt, interview with the author.

24 Ibid.

There would be two more Marine Expeditionary Brigades together with a special operations-capable MEU afloat—a very powerful landing force for any unexpected amphibious operations, if required.[25]

The 2nd Marine Division, commanded by Major General William M. Keys, had not been operationally deployed since World War II. When the ground offensive started, the Iraqi forces remained in defensive positions in the Kuwait Theater of Operations (KTO). The Iraqi front line units including the 14th, 7th, and 29th Infantry Divisions in the I MEF zone, as well as the 19th Infantry Division, offered but sporadic resistance. These forces were eventually bypassed (the idea of knowing when, or when not, to give battle is a key element in maneuver warfare) and later withdrew or surrendered.[26]

Iraqi artillery units fired at the Coalition forces during the ground offensive, but were not very accurate. The Iraqi army appeared to fire on various known points, but did not follow targets. Deserters and enemy prisoners of war who crossed the Saudi border just before the ground offensive complained of poor sanitation, poor morale, and the lack of water and food.[27] The Iraqis were also disorganized, and by mid-afternoon of the offensive's first day, the number of enemy prisoners increased significantly.

All of this illustrates the following:

1. The breakdown of communications with higher Iraqi headquarters;
2. The Iraqis' weak battlefield intelligence capabilities;
3. The success of the Marine Corps in achieving its maneuver warfare element of surprise.

The 2nd MARDIV began south of Al Abdallya and attacked north toward an area called the "Ice Cube Tray." Due to the artillery prep fires, surrendering Iraqis began streaming toward the division lines. Some 4,500 enemy prisoners, including a brigade commander and an Iraqi general, were captured and 248 tanks destroyed. The 3rd MAW flew more than 460 sorties that struck elements of six enemy divisions, destroyed 52 tanks, six artillery tubes, and nine armored personnel carriers, as well as additional FROG and AAA sites. The 1st

25 Keys, telephone interview with the author.

26 USMC FMFM1-1, *Campaigning,* 24.

27 Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals' War,* 164, 184-185.

FSSG continued to move prisoners to the rear and push supplies forward to I MEF forces.[28]

General Charles Krulak, who was the driving force of the USMC logistics tail, had leapfrogged ahead of the ground forces to set up a resupply forward observation base (FOB) about 45 kilometers into the area of responsibility (AOR). "The success of maneuver warfare as practiced in the Gulf War I by Generals Boomer, Keys, Myatt and myself," explained Krulak, "is not just to be focused on the combat forces . . . what enabled I MEF to do what it did was also attributed to the maneuver of the combat support and combat service support units. It is a 'package deal.'"[29]

The 4th MEB, which was aboard the ships of Task Force 156, was ordered to demonstrate pre-landing activity in the vicinity of Ash Shuaybah in order to support ground operations ashore. Using several deception activities, naval gunfire, and fire from the 4th MEB's helicopters, an amphibious demonstration got underway on February 25. This focused the attention of the Iraqis to the east, and they fired two Silkworm missiles toward the Marines offshore. The Iraqis next directed a few more divisions into positions along the coast and ordered another division north to provide reinforcements as a response to the assumed forthcoming amphibious Marine assault. This feint exploited the strength of maneuver warfare and Marine Corps deceptions by creating gaps in the Iraqi defense easily exploited by both the I MEF and II MEF.[30]

"I was part of Keys' division but I was also 4th Brigade," explained future Commandant James Conway, who was offshore at this time. "We deployed on the 17th of August aboard ship. So we went to the Gulf War early. We were there about eight or nine months or so total. But we were the amphibious force at sea that was ready to go into Kuwait City or wherever they sent us and essentially we never did land. So I had a chance to see grown men cry when the war kicked off and we're still out there threatening," he continued, "tying down many divisions but not getting ashore and doing any maneuver.[31]

This diversion was a key element of the Corps' maneuver warfare that enabled the Marine ground forces to envelop the Iraqis when hostilities

28 Keys, telephone interview with the author.

29 Krulak email to author.

30 General James Conway, 34th CMC, interview with the author, Annapolis, MD: July, 2013.

31 Ibid.

commenced. The offshore feint by the 4th Brigade pinned down four Iraqi divisions whose commanders believed this would be the Marines Corps' "storied" main approach from the sea.

After replenishing and refueling during the night and into the early morning hours, the I MEF continued attacking north on February 26. The objectives were the Al-Mutl'a Pass and Kuwait International Airport. The I MEF had advanced with the 2nd MARDIV and attacked northwest toward Al Jahrah while the 1st MARDIV turned toward the airport. When the 1st Marine Division stepped off to attack on February 26, it immediately ran into Iraqi T-72 tanks. Bad weather combined with smoke from oil wells fires had minimized visibility. Out of this inky darkness emerged two Marine AH-1Ws flying at ground level. Their Hellfire missiles quickly eliminated any threat posed by these Iraqi tanks.[32]

The 2nd MARDIV began its attack at 1200. The (U.S. Army) Tiger Brigade, 67th Armor, was in the lead supported by USMC and USAF aircraft along with the 3rd Battalion, in a joint operation that smashed its way to the northwest of Al-Jahrah, destroying the remaining Iraqi resistance as well as cutting off further Iraqi retreat.[33]

On February 27 at 0330, the 1st MARDIV finally seized Kuwait International Airport. The I MEF reports reflect that more than 70 enemy armored vehicles and 250 tanks were destroyed. By February 27, the I MEF had secured all its assigned objectives and awaited the arrival of JFC-N and JFC-E, which was to liberate Kuwait City. The honor of liberating Kuwait City was left to the Arab coalition partners once the Marine Corps finished off Iraqi resistance.[34]

Also on February 27, the 2nd MARDIV in the I MEF sector began the fourth day of the ground war. At 0500, Tiger Brigade troops made contact with Egyptian units and, four hours later, the JFC-N passed through the 2nd MARDIV. The division remained on Phase Line Bear and Al-Mutl'a Ridge until the offensive operations ended at 0800 on February 28. The final day of the ground offensive found the I MEF in a defensive position outside Kuwait City. In 2nd MARDIV, the 8th and 6th Marines spent the previous night planning to attack Al-Jahrah in order to seize the Kuwaiti military bases held

32 Myatt, interview with the author.

33 Keys, telephone interview with the author.

34 Myatt, interview with the author.

by the Iraqis that were in the area, as well as secure the northern road. When these offensive operations ended, the Marines once again remained outside the city so Arab coalition partners could gain credit for the liberation.[35]

The 2nd MARDIV also conducted a diversion with its LAI battalion. Though previously intermittent, the fighting between enemy units and the 1st MARDIV continued across the division's front until the seizure of the Kuwait International Airport seven days later. To cover their movement, on February 21 General Myatt had requested the 3rd Battalion, 12th Marines to fire 24 rounds at an Iraqi position near the minefield. He felt confident the earlier weeks of artillery raids had conditioned the Iraqi forward units to expect any harassing fire at uncertain points along their line. The Iraqi artillery responded with a single volley that impacted about 100 meters in front of an observation post of the 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines. This appeared to be more a reflex action by the Iraqis than anything else.[36]

Task Force Taro was the second task force deployed near the Saudi berm by February 21. Before moving to their sites, its battalions threw up several outposts to destroy or turn back any Iraqi patrols that could have moved into Saudi Arabia. General Myatt further moved his antitank platoon High Mobility Multi-Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWVs) along the berm as a precautionary measure against any enemy reconnaissance efforts.

The 2nd MARDIV was now close to the Kuwaiti border and ready to begin preliminary offensive operations. On January 27, 1991, several days after the arrival of the last elements, the division issued Frag Order 007, which ordered an artillery surface raid intended to destroy the selected targets across the border in the "agricultural area." The raid was successfully conducted by the 5th Battalion, 10th Marines. Batteries R and Q, armed with M114 8-inch and M109A1 155mm self-propelled howitzers, were selected as the firing units. The 2nd LAI Battalion was to provide security and screening.[37]

The purpose of the artillery surface raid was threefold. First, it was intended to develop an offensive spirit in the division's units, and second, to destroy the targets chosen (a truck park and logistics site). The third and most important goal was to measure the enemy's reactions to the raid, thus gauging the Iraqis' ability to detect, as well as to counterattack, the division.

35 Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals' War*, 187, 404.

36 Ibid.

37 Keys, telephone interview with the author.

Throughout the fire mission, no attempt was made by the enemy to return fire.[38] As a result, the 2nd Marine Division began to take the measure of the enemy through the first combat mission that gave the impression of Iraqi inability to bring artillery fire against the division.[39]

The division was planning to move into final assembly areas by the end of January in preparation for its role in offensive operations assigned by the original MEF operational plan. The MEF established a deception unit, Task Force Troy, to serve as an additional precaution in order to mask the disappearance of the division from its sector, and had a special deception capacity that emitted the electronic signature of an entire division. Task Force Troy meant to deceive the enemy by appearing like the 2nd Marine Division was still operating in the original area.

The division's forward CP personnel led the quartering party, accompanied by representatives of the Tiger Brigade, the 8th and 6th Marines, the 2nd Reconnaissance Battalion, and the 2nd LAI Battalion. Members of the CP scouted the division's new zone, Al Khanjar. There, they were met by members of the 1st Marine Division. February 24, 1991, had been set for G-Day. In order to have the entire division in its positions to conduct pre-assault operations and final maintenance, General Keys ordered the move completed by February 19.[40]

On January 29, the 2nd MARDIV engaged in its first skirmish of the war. Reports reached the division's combat operations center (COC) that large groups of Iraqi armored vehicles and tanks were moving below the Saudi-Kuwaiti border heading south. These groups were reported at various points along the fronts of the 2nd division, the Eastern Province Area Command (EPAC), and that of the 1st MARDIV. Other reports, from Observation Posts 2 and 4 close to the Saudi-Kuwaiti border, reported enemy armored vehicles entering the 2nd division's zone. Due to the forward movements of the 1st and 2nd divisions in preparation for their coming offensive operations, these OPs were manned by elements of the 1st Force Recon Battalion and the 1st MARDIV. The Marine forces at OP 2 engaged the

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.

40 Ibid.

enemy first, calling in air strikes and bringing the column under TOW missile fire.[41]

Company C of the 2nd LAI Battalion had already engaged 29 armored vehicles, and the battalion reported it was now engaging even more enemy armored targets. These engagements comprised the 2nd MARDIV's first ground combat kills during Operation Desert Storm. The 6th Marines, responding to an earlier inquiry by General Keys, who was concerned the enemy could break through into the division's zone, reported it could have a battalion of tanks and an infantry battalion ready to move in half an hour. The Tiger Brigade (consisting of 1st Brigade, 2nd Armored Division) was ordered to provide one company to move forward to defend the Marines' Direct Support Group.[42]

After these defensive actions, the 2nd MARDIV's offensive operations began several days before G-Day, the opening day of ground attack by the Marine Corps forces. On February 17, 1991, 2nd Reconnaissance Battalion moved its teams to the insertion points in the Saudi berm in preparation for entering Kuwait. The 2nd Reconnaissance Battalion was fulfilling the division's mission of conducting surveillance and reconnaissance of the area forward of current defensive positions in preparation for the coming attacks. General Keys' intent was to identify any gaps or weaknesses in the enemy defenses and, if there were any enemy units south of the breach, enhance the Marines' breaching operation by their absence.[43]

The 2nd Reconnaissance Battalion moved up to the berm on the night of the 17th and all its units were in their assigned positions by the next day. The Marines were operating in a small area of operations occupied by major elements of the Iraqi army. The presence of strong enemy antiaircraft artillery made the use of helicopters for the extraction and insertion of teams too dangerous, so General Keys motorized his companies to be more effective in his area of operations. Reconnaissance teams had six men, three of whom were mounted in a High Mobility Multi-Wheeled Vehicle armed with a .50-caliber machine gun. The other three were mounted in a HMMWV with communications gear.

41 Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals' War*, 365-366.

42 Ibid., 295.

43 Keys, telephone interview with the author.

On the night of the 17th, four recon teams walked over the berm to their initial positions and then into Kuwait on the 18th. Two more teams crossed and occupied the positions of the earlier teams to act as a radio-relay for the Marines farther forward using high frequency radios with limited range. Two teams were set up on the berm itself to provide an over watch for the operation, equipped with long-range electrical optical systems. The 6th Marines were available as an extraction force for the recon teams, if necessary.

Another battalion crossed the berm prior to G-Day. The attack order assigned the 2nd LAI Battalion to screen the division's flanks and front on the Kuwaiti side of the berm, which was to start on G minus 3 on February 21. The battalion was tasked to locate another breach site for the Tiger Brigade in the northwest and attempt to identify any gaps in the obstacle belt. The importance of the alternate breach site was that it would permit the Tiger Brigade to move its heavy armored power around the division's flank as well as to help to pull the remainder of the division through when required. The 2nd LAI Battalion was in contact with the enemy within an hour of beginning its operation. Enemy mortar fire dropped on them and a HMMWV carrying a low-altitude air defense team that was attached to the battalion received a direct hit.[44]

Company C operated on the northwest flank of the battalion and was preceding the other companies into the Kuwait AOR. The actions of Company C were illustrative of the entire 2nd LAI Battalion. The company's mission was to seize key terrain overlooking the obstacle belts and the enemy's positions. The company's aggressive and violent attack was designed to draw attention to it and thus away from the division's breach sites. It was expected to draw fire from Iraqi mortars and artillery, which would in turn expose the enemy weapons to counter-battery fire from the 10th Marines. The attack exceeded expectations. After crossing the border, Company C came under considerable mortar, artillery, and antitank barrages. The counter-battery fire that followed was inadequate to service the available enemy targets. Company C withdrew until the fire support took the desired effect. Shortly thereafter, Company C returned to the attack, maneuvering to assault the flank of Iraqi forces in the minefields. The company advanced under continuing antitank and artillery fire to the edge of the minefield. It classified the mines, and identified a gap for possible use by the Tiger Brigade. Company C maneuvered aggressively for about two days, exploiting Iraqi weaknesses. By February 23 (G minus 1),

44 Melson, *U. S. Marines in the Persian Gulf, 1990-1991*, 80.

Company C had killed numerous enemy infantry and destroyed many eight-wheeled vehicles and ten tanks.[45]

The 2nd LAI Battalion reported information on enemy activities, equipment, and troops. Operating almost continuously under indirect fire, antitank, and rockets, the battalion's companies engaged the enemy tanks, troops, and artillery on at least 17 occasions, using close air support, organic antitank weapons, and artillery fire from the 10th Marines. During the three days, the battalion accounted for numerous enemy dead, the destruction of 35 tanks with air strikes, another dozen tanks from other causes, and the capture of 120 EPWs.

Of even greater significance was the activity by the light-armored vehicles (LAVs), which had the desired effect of drawing the attention of the Iraqis away from the actual area of the division's assault, as well as away from the breach. The 2nd LAI Battalion's operations were also significant because the Iraqis began using their artillery against it. The battalion frequently came under heavy artillery and mortar fire while in continuous contact with the enemy for three days. The casualties from this enemy fire were light and the enemy disclosed the locations of their batteries to Marine counter-battery radar. Using artillery and air, the 2nd Division was fully able to knock numerous Iraqi artillery pieces out of action even before the G-Day assault. This was of utmost importance because if these guns had remained undiscovered, they could have inflicted significant casualties on the 2nd Division as it moved through the breach.

At first glance, the positioning of artillery units forward of the maneuver elements they were about to support seemed to violate every principle in regard to the employment of artillery. In fact it made good tactical sense. Intelligence had already reported that the Iraqi brigades position on the division's flanks and front could reach the area of the breach with approximately 500 guns. Many of these guns had out-ranged the 10th Marines' M198 155mm howitzers since their range was a little over 30 kilometers when using the Rocket-Assisted Projectiles (RAP). In order to ensure the assault elements had accurate, timely, and responsive fire support, it was worth taking the risk to move the artillery ahead of the maneuver units. A measure of security was

45 Ibid., 156.

provided to them by the 23rd Marines, the 3rd Battalion, and the 2nd LAI Battalion, in screening positions on the division's flanks.[46]

By the end of G Day, the desert was filled with the sounds of combat. By 0430, the division's artillery preparation fires had begun. There were flaming MLRS rockets as well as tracers of Iraqi anti-aircraft fire. More than 1,400 rounds were fired against 40 artillery position targets in just eleven minutes. In effect, the Iraqi battery positions were fired on by a Marine battalion with dual-purpose improved conventional munitions. The MLRS battery fired on four targets deep in the division's zone. Air strikes were also run against targets on Phase Line Red.[47]

At 0530, H-Hour, the lead elements of the 6th Marine Regiment, crossed the line of departure and followed the colored lanes assigned to its battalions. The 6th Marines had undergone intensive training and preparation during the months prior to their deployment. The regiment had the task of leading the assault through the Iraqi defensive lines as well as widening the gap on the other side of the second minefield in order to allow the rest of the division to be pulled through. They had carefully rehearsed their role prior to the first day's battle and had constructed a training range and oriented on the azimuths the assault battalions would follow. Personnel were schooled in the use of electronic navigation aids, and a detailed fire support plan was prepared. The 6th Marines closed on the first of the obstacle belts and, at 0600, its 1st Battalion reached the minefield. By 0615, both the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines and 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marines had arrived at the edge of the obstacle belt in lanes Green 5 and 6 and Blue 3 and 4. The work of the special engineer unit attached to the 6th Marines, Task Force Breach Alpha, began in earnest.

The enemy's defensive belts consisted of wire obstacles and two minefields, all of which had been noted in the intelligence reports developed by the Marine recon units. In order to accomplish its task, the force was well-equipped with sixteen M60A1 tanks with track-width mine plow and two M60A1 dozer tanks, four armored vehicle launched bridges (AVLB), thirty-nine M58 line-charge trailers, four M60A1 tanks with mine rakes, eighteen AAV's with M154 three-shot mine-clearing line charges, fifteen M9

46 Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals' War,* 355-374,346-350; Simmons, *U.S. Marines,* 286-311. See also, Melson, *U. S. Marines in the Persian Gulf, 1990–1991*, 80.

47 Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals' War,* 355-374,346-350.

armored combat earthmovers, 22 AAVs for the engineer squads, and six M1A1 tanks with mine plows.[48]

In preparation for the attack, the 6th Marines ran several air strikes on the "Ice Cube Tray." This exposed a built-up area containing a large concentration of dug-in Iraqi tanks and bunkers. Another regimental time on target (TOT) was fired into the center of the Ice Cube Tray by the 10th Marines to serve as additional assurance against disruption from this area. A final issue that had to be resolved before the division moved off was the location of the eastern boundary of their AOR. The 2nd Marine Division, which was consolidated along Phase Line Red, was some kilometers ahead of the 1st Marine Division, which had not yet captured the Al Jabir airfield. The previous boundary ran about one and a half kilometers west leading south from Kuwait City to Al Jaber, placing the road within the 1st MARDIV's zone.[49]

The I MEF staff was eager for 2nd MARDIV to seize its objective at Al Jahrah as the 1st Division began its move. This was critical because the reports that morning indicated the Iraqi forces were retreating back to Iraq. The intelligence reports as well as Kuwaiti resistance confirmed convoys were forming in Kuwait City and moving through to the Mutla Ridge and Al Jahrah area.

General Keys had convinced General Boomer, commanding I MEF, to order the 2nd Marine Division to perform its separate breach of the Iraqi defensive lines. This separation of the 2nd MARDIV had produced a considerable end result with only six Marines killed in action and 38 wounded. The light casualties served to enhance the value of the victory won by the division, which included the fact that it was fought properly on all levels (tactical, strategic, and operational). Sometimes, the effective lessons learned are those that reaffirm the principles by which wars have always been won. Thus, the lesson to be garnered from the 2nd Marine Division is that the correct execution of a campaign is the validation of the training and thought that was developed by the Marine Corps over the years and punctuated with the use of maneuver warfare tenets now installed as part of the Marine Corps doctrinal philosophy.[50]

48 Ibid.

49 Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals' War,* 346-350; Melson, *U. S. Marines in the Persian Gulf, 1990–1991."*

50 Keys, telephone interview with the author.

According to General Keys, maneuver warfare is a way of thinking regarding everything in combat—the ultimate goal of which is the destruction of the enemy. He perceived this as the province of the division and higher-level echelons. Maneuver warfare enables the commanders at all levels to fight smarter than their opponents. This contributed greatly to the division's accomplishments. The 2nd Marine Division played a significant role in the accomplishment of the strategic mission, which was freeing Kuwait from its occupation by the army of Iraq.

Part 4: High Praise for the Marine Corps

The swift movement of the 2nd Marine division alongside the 1st Marine Division through Kuwait led General Norman Schwarzkopf to order the early advance of the other coalition forces. "The Gulf War's operational art used tactical events (i.e. battles, engagements and the refusal to join battle) to strike directly at Iraq's strategic center of gravity," explained Maneuver Warfare plank holder Lieutenant Colonel G. I. Wilson in a postwar assessment of the Marine Corps' use of maneuver warfare. Wilson continued:

> The idea was to win strategically without resorting to a prolonged ground war. . . . It was a matter of deciding where and when to fight and where and when not to fight. . . . [Marine Corps] war winning operational art [maneuver warfare] centers on a decisive outcome quickly without visiting the butcher shop of a nasty ground war. The application of the operational art and correct identification of Iraq's strategic center of gravity proved central to the maneuver style success. The refusal to enter the ground war prematurely let the planners shape the operation and focus on winning the war at the highest possible level—the strategic level.
>
> Baghdad was much more than a geographic location on a map. It was the nerve network and infrastructure of the Iraqis' political military organization. By throwing strength against weakness, allied air against Iraq's weak air and air defense, Iraq's command, control, and communications were effectively erased. . . . Loss of the ability to communicate and exercise command and control at the highest levels prevented Iraq from coordinating the defense of the Saddam Line and counterattacking . . . also this served well in shaping the ground war's actions by [the Marine Corps]. . . . The quick in and out artillery raids by the Marines preempted Iraqi efforts... the Iraqis were in severe trouble because the Marines were inside their decision-making cycle [OODA Loop]. . . . it was also integrated and sequenced to

> throw Marine strength against Iraqi weakness in the ground campaign. . . . the Iraqi static defensive position played into the double dilemma of either staying put, making them vulnerable targets from maneuver from the west, south and the sea . . . or if they abandoned the static defense they're vulnerable to the devastating air and artillery attack.[51]

Lieutenant Colonel Wilson was one of the original developers of General Gray's "fighting smarter" philosophy. Maneuver warfare had now become the battlefield-tested doctrinal philosophy of a Marine Corps Way of War.

General James Mattis, who is now the nation's secretary of defense under President Trump, shared his personal thoughts about his actions during Desert Storm as it applied to the now-institutionalized maneuver warfare utilized by the Marine Corps:

> Yes, no doubt about it. . . . [And] as they put out the doctrine series it was just gobbled up. They [Marine Corps] couldn't print them fast enough, from war fighting to strategy and campaigning to tactics to logistics and all were adding to the body of understanding of how it all came together. You didn't just fight with the ground . . . element of maneuver warfare, you fought it also with the air element, with the logistics fight, and your command and control system was set up that way, like I said, for command and feedback. So as we got further into it and the years went by, during the Gulf War it was clearly [employed]. I was in Mike Myatt's First Marine Division as a battalion commander, and one of his regimental commanders was a guy named Carl Colfert who had been in General Gray's regiment and all at Lejeune, and so once again when I commanded one of the assault battalions to open the way into the obstacle belts into Kuwait, my regimental commander and my division commander were adherents to this [fighting smarter]. This was the way we were going to fight.
>
> So . . . freedom was left to us, we were given mission type orders; we knew what we were going to do. We rehearsed the basic maneuvers to the point that I don't think, over about three or four days of fighting, I had to give more than a couple of tactical orders the whole time. The battalion was so well trained and Colonel Colfert's regiment was so well trained . . . that it was just a matter of maneuver and we had in those days active batteries and I don't think I ever had fewer than 16 artillery tubes

51 G. I. Wilson, "The Gulf War, Maneuver Warfare, and the Operational Art," *Marine Corps Gazette* (June, 1991), 23.

> firing for me as 3-11 maneuvered its artillery on its own. Nobody was telling them what to do; the artillery units picked them up and moved them as was needed. . . . On the day we broke through to Kuwait City the artillery guys were there lock, stock and barrel maneuvering . . . artillery like it was self-propelled and getting us through there.[52]

Also, in true maneuver warfare leadership, General Myatt found himself so advanced he was surrounded by Iraqis while in his command post. According to Myatt, the rounds were zipping through the Command Post. Captain Eddie S. Ray of Company B, 1st LAI Battalion, Task Force Shepherd, realized the 1st Marine Division's commander needed immediate help and he set out to provide that help. Captain Ray's actions during the early morning hours of G+1 of *Operation Desert Storm* earned him one of only two Navy Cross's awarded during the entire Gulf War I.

The following is a brief account of Captain Ray's action:

> An Iraqi mechanized division counterattacked elements of the 1st Marine Division, in the vicinity west of the flame and smoke–engulfed Burgan Oil Fields in southeastern Kuwait. As dense black smoke shrouded the battlefield, an Iraqi mechanized brigade engaged the 1st Marine Division Forward Command Post security forces. During the ensuing intense ten-hour battle, Captain Ray repeatedly maneuvered his Light Armored Vehicle Company in harm's way, skillfully integrating his Light Armored Infantry weapons, reinforcing TOW's, and AH-1W Attack Helicopters to decisively defeat the main Iraqi counter-attacks. Leading from the front and constantly exposed to large volumes of enemy fire, Captain Ray led swift, violent attacks directly into the face of the vastly larger enemy force. These attacks shocked the enemy, destroyed 50 enemy Armored Personnel Carriers, and resulted in the capture of over 250 Iraqi soldiers. Operating perilously close to the attacking enemy, Captain Ray's courage, composure under fire, and aggressive war fighting spirit were instrumental in the defeat of a major enemy effort and the successful defense of the Division's Forward Command Post.

52 Mattis, telephone interview with the author.

Captain Ray created his own mission orders knowing General Myatt's intent and then proceeded to prosecute them in the form of maneuver warfare required to defeat this enemy.) [53]

The final assessment of the use of maneuver warfare application by the Marine Corps can be found in The Annual Report to the President and the Congress from then-Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney in 1992, which also acknowledged this Marine Corps doctrinal change. Again, as stated above, SECDEF Cheney had conferred with Col. John Boyd concerning maneuver warfare on more than one occasion during both Desert Shield and Desert Storm operations.[54] He states in the official report to Congress and President Bush:

> The effectiveness of our Marine Corps forces was most dramatically demonstrated by the brilliant maneuver method of the I MEF through numerically superior defensive forces into Kuwait City—revalidating the maneuver warfare doctrine adopted by the Corps. The threat of an amphibious assault during Operation Desert Storm was a masterfully successful deception. It probably saved countless American and Coalition lives by diverting and fixing six Iraqi divisions to aid the ground assault phase of operations. Having the amphibious group in the Persian Gulf provided the Commander in Chief, Central Command with a unique and flexible power projection and strategic reserve force.[55]

In a recent "Boyd" seminar on February 15, 2014 in San Diego, Colonel Mike Wyly aptly summed up Gulf War I's adaptation of maneuver warfare:

> August 1990. The first Gulf War. Our ground troops are staged in Saudi Arabia, ready to attack the Iraqi Army in Kuwait, while the Air Force bombs and bombs and bombs for 180 days—6 months! Joint Chiefs of Staff are reluctant to start the ground attack. Mass casualties are predicted crossing minefields, barbed wire, and trenches filled with burning oil. But finally, 24 February 1991, we here in the U.S. are told via television, "Its 'G-Day,' the ground attack begins! What you don't know when G-Day is announced 24 Feb. is that the ground attack already began 39 hours ago when

53 Myatt, interview with the author; US Navy Citation for Navy Cross recipient Capt. Eddie Ray, USMC, Gulf War I. http://www.socnet.com/archive/index.php/t-54591.html.

54 Coram, *Boyd*, 422-425.

55 Annual Report to the President and the Congress, *Dick Cheney Secretary of Defense* (Washington DC: February, 1992), 121.

> Maneuver Warfare-imbued Major General Mike Myatt, commanding 1st Marine Division infiltrated thousands of Marines through the gaps and weak spots—a classic maneuver warfare tactic—leaving the Iraqi front-line defenders, who had anticipated an old-fashioned Marine Corps frontal assault a la Tarawa and Iwo Jima, receiving now the shocking news: "The Marines are behind us!" "How many?" They don't know. One enemy soldier inside your lines gets counted multiple times. "Are the Marines going to attack us now in the rear? Or are they going straight to Baghdad?" Marine casualties light, Iraqis, mass surrender. They don't know how to handle it![56]

The I and II Marine Expeditionary Forces (I MEF and II MEF) together numbered some 92,990 Marines, making Operation Desert Storm one of the largest Marine Corps operations in its entire history. Of that number, just 23 Marines were killed in action or later died of wounds from the time the air war was launched on January 16 until the cease-fire took effect 43 days later. In the final tally, 24 Marines lost their lives (14 killed by friendly fire and one from an accident, leaving only nine KIA) and only 92 were wounded. These statistics support and foster the development of maneuver warfare for the Marine Corps.[57]

Lastly, the speed of bringing these actions to a successful close saved tens of millions of dollars in daily war expenses. Lives and treasure saved, plus success in the Kuwaiti battlespace earned maneuver warfare and fighting smarter its place in Marine Corps doctrinal philosophy, strategy, and tactics going forward.

The Marines had once more added to their battlefield history of success—but not at the previous costs suffered from Belleau Wood to Hue City.

56 Wyly, email to author, March 19, 2014.

57 Simmons, *US Marines,* 310; See KIA/WIA chart, reproduced on page 40.

Chapter 5

Support from the Top

Because of *Operation Desert Storm*, the "fighting smart" doctrinal philosophy of maneuver warfare entrenched itself within the fabric of the Marine Corps. The "evolutionists" had presented to the Corps the German model utilized during the early days of World War II, as well as a liberal dose of Sun Tzu. The Fleet Marine Force Manual-1 (FMFM-1) provides more on this subject, including a complete definition of this Marine-centric warfighting doctrine:

> You will notice that this book [FMFM-1] does not contain specific techniques and procedures for conduct. Rather, it provides broad guidance in the form of concepts and values. It requires judgment in application…The thoughts contained here represent not just guidance for actions in combat, but a way of thinking in general. This manual thus describes a philosophy for action in war and in peace . . . the object of war is to impose our will on our enemy. The means to that end is the organized application or threat of violence by military force. . . . [War] is the unique product of the dynamic interaction of myriad moral and physical forces. While founded on the laws of science, war demands, ultimately, the intuition and creativity of art.
>
> The warfighting doctrine which we derive from our theory is one based on maneuver. This represents a change since, with a few notable exceptions — Stonewall Jackson in the Valley, Patton in Europe, MacArthur at Inchon—the American way of war traditionally has been one of attrition. This style of warfare generally has worked for

> us because, with our allies, we have enjoyed vast numerical and technological superiority. But we can no longer presume such a luxury. In fact, an expeditionary force in particular must be prepared to win quickly, with minimal casualties and limited external support, against a physically superior foe. This requirement mandates a doctrine of maneuver warfare.
>
> By this time it should be clear that maneuver warfare exists not so much in the specific methods used—we eschew formulas—but in the mind of the Marine. . . . Maneuver warfare is a way of thinking in and about war that should shape our every action. It is a state of mind born of a bold will, intellect, initiative, and ruthless opportunism. It is a state of mind bent on shattering the enemy morally and physically by paralyzing and confounding him, by avoiding his strength, by quickly and aggressively exploiting his vulnerabilities, and by striking him in the way that will hurt him most. In short, maneuver warfare is a philosophy for generating the greatest decisive effect against the enemy at the least possible cost to ourselves—a philosophy of "fighting smarter.[1]

The primary critic of the Marine Corps' adoption of these warfighting tools remains Bill Lind. This camp argues that careerism (the policy or practice of advancing one's career often at the cost of one's integrity) is superseding the implementation of true maneuver warfare. Some current junior officers complain that, once a Marine officer attains a certain rank, the promotion system does not foster a true maneuverist posture because he or she must conform to career goals over philosophical warfare methodologies. They contended in the past, as they do now, that in the post-Gray commandancy years, true maneuver warfare has been forgotten or mostly ignored by both the more recent commandants and the Marine Corps leadership cadre as a whole. The evidence does not support this claim.

Maneuver warfare's doctrinal usage has been evident during the interwar years in both humanitarian and military environments. It also played a significant role in how the Marine Corps went about warfighting during *Operation Enduring Freedom*, *Operation Iraqi Freedom*, and the *Global War on Terrorism* (GWOT). The role maneuver warfare plays can be recognized then and now in the actions of the senior Marine Corps leadership and its development and implementation of a Marine Corps Way of War regarding

1 FMFM-1, 1, 15, 37, 77. The negative assessments by Lind (and some current junior officers) were still being expressed as of the time of this writing.

campaigning, strategy, and tactics—including follow-on actions of this leadership cadre.

With the die officially cast by General Gray and aided by the initial proponents of maneuver warfare, a number of efforts to further evolve this "smarter warfighting" philosophy have been put into effect. The "evolutionary" (rather than "revolutionary") turnover is the key to understanding this, and it is consistently referred to by the majority of Marines interviewed and who were in this vanguard of the "maneuverists" who fine-tuned the doctrinal philosophy of General Gray's maneuver warfare.[2]

Even before General Gray officially issued *Warfighting*, there was a certain buy-in by his then-superior officers. There seems to have been an unofficial and yet sanctioned move in the direction of a "fighting smarter" mentality from within the Corps. Was this the iconic "Small Wars" DNA going back to a pre-World War I Marine Corps' posture of dealing with insurgents and guerillas of Central America and the Caribbean?

"In my humble opinion, we didn't have a Chinaman's chance in hell to get that [maneuver warfare] approved through the system," explained General Gray recently. "We decided to do it the other way." His insight is extraordinarily valuable in understanding how this all came about:

> We said, "No, we're going to work it from the ground up and create the people who believe in it and want to do it." That's what we did. As I had the opportunity to expand my authority, that was when I went from the brigade, then I went to Quantico Development Center. I was in charge of doctrine, and concepts, and tactics, and testing, and all that kind of thing. We did a lot of that. At the very top, you had people like General Barrow, the Commandant. He had a good feel for this kind of thing, because Barrow and I were a lot alike.
>
> We're more in the Sun Tzu philosophy than in the German philosophy. Barrow didn't fight in the islands in World War II. He fought in China against the guerrillas. He understood what I was talking about. A lot of people don't know this, he and I were pretty good friends. Barrow would come down to Quantico and come into my office to see me. He'd close the door and put his feet up on the desk. We'd talk for a couple of hours about tactics and strategy and thought process, and all that. He couldn't just

2 Gray, interview with the author.

automatically demand that they make this change either, so he kept a bubble over it. Barrow was always supportive.

Next, Commandant Shoup said that the Marine Corps, its principle role is amphibious operation, you're coming from the sea, and that's special enough, so we're not going to add [maneuver warfare] to that here. But what we will do is put guerrilla warfare and related type of activities on the front burner and put it at the front of the list, and focus' our training and preparedness on that. That was a decision made in 1963. As a result of this a guerrilla warfare school at Camp Pendleton, Camp Lejeune, in the northern training area in Okinawa, and a smaller type activity in Kaneohe Bay were implemented. Also and more importantly, we sent Marines to a special warfare school at Fort Bragg. We also sent Marines to psychological warfare school at Fort Bragg, and all of that. A lot of that careful preparation, and the first people that went to Vietnam were pretty well all trained to do those things. Then, they were overwhelmed by the size of the troops to be provided. By the time, for example, Mike Wyly went to Vietnam; they didn't go through any of that [Small Wars] training. That's why people like Mike, they were not happy with the training that they got. What I'm saying is that some people got it . . . Mike then was offered the opportunity to take advantage of what General Shoup set up.

Also, in 1962, when General Maxwell Taylor went to Vietnam to assess the situation, he came back with eight or nine major recommendations to improve things in South Vietnam. A lot of that was intelligence and intelligence-related, and so on.

"Bear in mind now," continued General Gray, "that Gen Victor Krulak, when he was a brigadier, his area of expertise was in counter-insurgency." The general continued:

He was in charge of all that kind of thing. Brilliant in his own right, General Krulak, the elder one, was as smart as they got. A huge proponent, as were many other senior marines, of counter-insurgency type operations, protecting the people, doing all of those things you had to do in a guerrilla environment, as opposed to the Westmoreland approach of an attrition kind of war idea. That was a big gun battle in the JCS, and everywhere else, all the while they were there in Vietnam. There was a big argument about that throughout the war.

Krulak, of course, was FMFPAC at the time. When Walt was the CG in Vietnam, and then later General Cushman and the like, this was all part of the continuing argument

that they had with Westmoreland. The bringing in of the intelligence, and of surveillance, and the reconnaissance, and combining that, in my opinion, would have been a natural evolution of what was started in the early '60s. Of course, the way General Krulak operated, all he had to do was just go to Camp Pendleton and be briefed, and, "No, that's not what I want to do, let's do that." Then it happens. That's the way he was. He was good, and he believed in that methodology. That was not the easiest thing to do at the time.[3]

When asked whether the Corps would have been more successful following the CAP program[4] rather than the Westmoreland attrition program, General Gray unequivocally replied, "Absolutely. Oh yeah. The CAP program was so superb, right in the middle of all that." The general elaborated on this opinion:

That was a good program for all the right reasons. I said that even in '64, that's what we thought we'd be doing. They were training the South Vietnamese army to look just like the American army. When I had my unit in Da Nang, before we went up north to operate out of Khe Sanh, they had all these dump trucks. I can remember saying, "Jeez, if they lined up all the dump trucks around here, they could stretch all the way to Hanoi." That's the way it was. What we really needed was a couple of soldiers out there on a bridge working with the local people to protect them.

The South Vietnamese people, the farmers and the rural people, they didn't care so much about freedom, they wanted security. If we provided the security better than the Viet Cong, we were successful. When we didn't, we weren't. . . . All those programs that they had . . . I'm a big supporter of what General Krulak did. He was very supportive of me in '64 when I was operating up north. The air wing people didn't want to provide us any food or anything like that. Krulak sent a message to the air group commander, "Feed my Marines, that is what Major Gray wants and needs. If you can't find the money, I will." That was the end of that argument.

He came out, when we had a move from Tiger Tooth mountain to Dong Re Lao mountain complex, he came out to Da Nang because the powers that be back in Hawaii

3 Ibid.

4 CAP—the Combined Action Program—called for working directly with local South Vietnamese forces at the village level.

and Washington wanted to deal with a lesser sized force. He was staying in an air force Quonset hut that night, and I wanted to see him and I briefed him. He the next day, got in his plane, went up and flew around Dong Re Lao. He came back and sent for me, and said, "I agree with you. You need exactly what you're talking about. Write them your message and tell them that." I wrote my first General Krulak-gram right there. He said, "That's good." I replied, "I never wrote a General Krulak-gram before. He made me change a few simple errors, and we sent it out. He asked me if I wanted a beer. He was there in a Japanese kimono drinking a beer. I said, "No, I'll have a Coke." Yes, I knew Victor Krulak very well."[5]

The issues of maneuver warfare's evolution had been fostered and nurtured by many of the senior leadership within the Marine Corps in some way, shape, or form. For the most part, this senior Marine Corps guidance or oversight had a positive effect on this winding evolutionary process. The 28th Commandant of the Corps, General P. X. Kelley, was very popular with the reformers during the initial evolution of maneuver warfare during the beginning days of his commandancy. Unbeknownst to many, Commandant Kelley supported the concepts of maneuver warfare, in part by giving Colonel Mike Wyly the permission he needed to help Bill Lind finish his book on maneuver warfare.

"The way my writing got into Lind's book in the form of the Appendix and most of the annotated bibliography (I authored most of the annotations) was that Westview Press sent Bill's manuscript back to him indicating it was 'not long enough,'" recalled Colonel Wyly while explaining what transpired during the Kelley commandancy. Wyly continued:

So Bill called me and said "Mike, didn't you write some things?" Lind was aware of my exercises because he had been present one spring day on the Capitol steps in Washington, when I had created some of them. And, yes, I had them, the manuscripts of the exercises stashed away at home in my dresser drawer. I used to deliver the exercises regularly in class without notes calling on captains for solutions, as I drew arrows, etc. on a big white chalkboard with a tactical sketch map that had been drawn by my wife. So my manuscripts of the exercises became the Appendix to *Maneuver*

5 Gray interview.

Warfare Handbook by Bill Lind, with Appendix written by Colonel Michael D. Wyly.[6]

Colonel Wyly and others believed P. X. Kelley's later disassociation and perceived about-face stemmed from a number of concurrent factors this work has already discussed. At the top of the list was Bill Lind's caustic demeanor.[7]

The post-Vietnam era tossed people like Lind into positions of influence regarding major military decisions from Capitol Hill. Lind's Ivy League education in German history and war studies bolstered his credentials. As an academic and maneuver warfare subject expert, Lind created (at his own expense) a teaching / lecturing / mentoring role within this Marine Corps evolutionary process. However, Lind, in his somewhat unorthodox manner of trying to further the evolution within the Corps, managed to alienate a significant number of key senior Marines, among them General Kelley. In particular, Lind took it upon himself to incite the junior officer cadre to question senior Marine leadership about its lack of an aggressive pursuit of maneuver warfare for the Corps. Lind had conducted weekend meetings with these "Young Turks" at his Arlington home. "These Friday night meetings," explained Wyly, "eventually led these young captains to invite me to Lind's home, not only be part of this ad hoc learning process, but to also vet Bill Lind vis a vis the U.S.M.C."

General Kelley also became uncomfortable with the image that was being created by Lind and others, and said so in a speech at the Command and Staff College in Ft. Leavenworth. According to Colonel Wyly, who was in attendance, Kelley announced that "Marines meeting in basements to discuss maneuver warfare is nonprofessional. . . . [I]t would be best to do it up front, not in basements." Wyly, too, had had informal meetings for similar discussions at his SAMS Course [School of Advanced Studies]. Commandant Kelley wanted these opened up to foster the idea that all Marine officers were welcome.[8]

"General Kelley was a better friend of the maneuver crowd than many people think," explained Colonel G. I Wilson, "but being in DC he was concerned about generating enemies faster than friends and supporters, and

6 Wyly interview. See also the appendix in Bill Lind, *Maneuver Warfare Handbook* (Westview Press, 1985).

7 Wyly interview.

8 Ibid.

thought Lind was not helpful by being so bombastic. In fact," continued Colonel Wilson,

> I think PX [General Kelley] thought Lind did not learn the German lessons of not generating more enemies than friends while in battle. . . . I think PX might also have been influenced by Gen Trainor, too, who openly critiqued Maneuver Warfare but in turn got called on it in the [Marine Corps] Gazette. . .
>
> PX and Wyly were of the same mind and I even think Wyly was cautious of Lind being bombastic, but knew Lind had a certain appeal to the real mavericks who were then junior officers. But being bombastic only goes so far. Lind was particularly good at it because he in fact knew about the USMC and its missions/capabilities along with a great grasp of the history of warfare. This was to the chagrin of those who did not but were great at looking good but had not studied their profession as Lind had. . . . This really made many pseudo-officers uncomfortable so they resorted to personally attacking Lind and his weight . . . they attacked him personally, not the issues, and in the meantime Lind cleaned house by sticking to the issues….[9]

Being young apostles of Maneuver Warfare and not fully understanding the impact/import of what we were trying to do," explained Major Bill Woods, one of the other original plank holders, "we misinterpreted Kelley's lack of immediate and vocal support as being against the effort." Woods continued in an effort to better understand General Kelley's position:

> We didn't understand that Kelley couldn't just jump up and condemn the current fighting style. [General] Gray knew that when he began to sell Maneuver Warfare as "fighting smart." A retired, foul mouthed fighter jock (Col. John Boyd), an overweight pompous civilian (Bill Lind) and a couple of young Captains with no combat experience are not much reason for tossing out all your current operational theories, particularly when that motley group is espousing war fighting methods gleaned from an army that lost its' last couple of wars. Kelley was a warrior; but he was also a pragmatist…[10]

9 G. I. Wilson e-mail,

10 Col. Woods email to the author.

Further complicating matters for General Kelley was the fact that staffers Bill Lind and Jeffery Record, along with Congressman Newt Gingrich and Senators Sam Nunn and Gary Hart, were putting considerable pressure on the Marine Corps by pushing the reform movement during his commandancy. The Brookings Institute published the short but scathing study *Where Does the Marine Corps Go from Here?* by Martin Binkin and Jeffery Record that made the case for the complete dismantling of the Marine Corps.[11]

Coinciding with these two powerful pulls on the 28th Marine Corps commandant is the fact that the Defense Department in general was also under media scrutiny. *Time* magazine published an article in 1983 entitled "The Winds of Reform."[12] The thrust of this front page cover story put John Boyd and his acolytes front and center in the controversy of misdirected Defense Department spending at the same time John Boyd was becoming a prominent player in the Marine Corps' evolution into maneuver warfare. To further compound the pressures on General Kelley, and what could have been the final straw that broke the camel's back, came the Marine barracks bombing in Beirut just a few months later. The stresses of these concurrent events took General Kelley's focus away from maneuver warfare; he had more pressing and immediate issues to deal with for the Corps.

When General Carl Mundy assumed the commandancy of the Marine Corps as the 30th Marine to hold the important position, he continued developments begun by General Gray. This continuity is in evidence in an article Mundy wrote for *National Security and Defense* applying to sea-basing in the littoral environment:

> Because of our ability to operate from the sea, from the amphibious and tactical aircraft platforms that are small moveable islands of our national resolve, unencumbered by basing requests or overflight problems, we can conduct subtle and controlled engagement across the broad spectrum of diplomatic and military interaction. Because of this, Marines can come ashore rapidly for humanitarian purposes, as we did in Bangladesh, Northern Iraq, and Somalia, and, when needed, we can move into rapidly planned and executed combat operations from low to

11 Martin Binkin and Jeffery Record, *Where Does the Marine Corps Go from Here?* (Brookings Institute, 1976).

12 Isaacson, Walter, "The Winds of Reform," *Time Magazine* (March 7, 1983).

medium-intensity conflict. . . . Maneuver warfare is the heart of *From the Sea*.[13] It is a warfighting style that emphasizes our strengths: the use of rapid maneuver, quick decision making, and the inherent flexibility of sea basing. The rapid seizure or securing of ports and airfields by forward operating Marines can enable the entry of Army and Air Force elements, as necessary. . . .

The Marine Corps will continue to provide what some have termed, the most general purpose of the general purpose forces with strategic agility, on-scene presence, self-sustaining, and high flexibility, for a variety of crisis response demands. Our ability to rapidly position two Marine Expeditionary Units off Somalia is illustrative of this point. We have got two powerful self-contained air-ground task forces sitting on the horizon there—where they can be seen but not touched by clan violence. They have no logistic or political footprint ashore, but in minutes they can respond with an overwhelming combined arms team consisting of anything from attack helicopters to armored vehicles—launched from the sea.[14]

General Mundy continued to further USMC maneuver warfare in the joint Naval publication entitled *Naval Warfighting* (NPD-1, 1994), essentially a derivative of FMFM-1 *Warfighting* that stressed the principles of initiative, exploitation, combined arms, and independent action by commanding officers at all levels. It was also an attempt to bring maneuver warfare, the Defense Department, and U.S. Army -driven Netcentrics into alignment. Netcentrics could enhance the speed of command issues in order to generate a higher tempo of action than that of the enemy. In an environment where chaos is the rule, speed of command will aid the naval forces in adapting to rapidly changing situations and thus exploit fleeting situations at much higher speeds than the adversary.

Mundy's words echo not only General Gray's but Col. Boyd's and demonstrate without a doubt that the Marine Corps was moving beyond attrition as a means of success in future battlespaces.[15]

13 Marine Corps, *Operational Maneuver from the Sea,* Distribution 145 00000100,4 January1996.

14 General Carl Mundy CMC, USMC, "The Role of the Marine Corps in the Post-Cold War Era." *National Defense Magazine*. November 1, 1993: www.heritage.org about staff nonstaff/e/general-e—mundy, accessed May 17, 2014.

15 Ibid.

The Corps' 31st Commandant, General Krulak, was instrumental in not only promulgating the *Warfighting* publication, but also adding to the depth and main focus of Gray's "fighting smarter" doctrine, strategy, and tactics. General Krulak applied maneuver warfare doctrine during the second phase of operations of *Desert Storm* to the logistics support necessary to support the offensive actions of both the 1st MARDIV and 2nd MARDIV. General Boomer, the overall commander of the USMC efforts during this time period, had the highest regard and praise for General Krulak's logistical support efforts. "I had commanders who were independent thinkers [a basic tenet of maneuver warfare]," explained Boomer, " and [w]henever they told me they could do something, I knew them well enough to know that they could do it even if it involved some risk."[16]

General Boomer had to place his logistical support ahead of his combat forces in order to support maneuver warfare's fast tempo in Kuwait. Taking the initiative and commander's intent, Krulak (without full combat support) established the Al Khanjar support base 45 kilometers ahead of the advance. Not only was Krulak a believer in fighting smarter, he was also a successful practitioner of it. Because of his efforts, the Marines were able to utilize the fast tempo and follow their commander's intent in driving the Iraqis out of Kuwait. This was accomplished much faster than had been planned for by General Schwarzkopf. The Marines in *Desert Storm* were an unstoppable force, and by utilizing the new doctrine of FMFM-1, they further added to the success by saving lives and treasure. The baptism under fire of the "fighting smarter" doctrine proved that the impetus of maneuver warfare would become part of the ethos, spirit, and practice of future Marine Corps actions.[17]

During his commandancy, General Krulak expanded FMFM-1 and its follow-on editions with his publishing of Marine Corps Doctrinal Publications (MCDP-1, *Warfighting*; MCDP-1-1, *Strategy*; MCDP-1-2, *Campaigning*; and MCDP-1-3, *Tactics*) intended to amplify and enhance the original intent of the Gray institutionalization of "fighting smarter."[18]

16 General Walt Boomer, USMC, *Frontline,* PBS, November 1, 1994. See www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/gulf/oral/boomer/1.htm.

17 Krulak email to the author.

18 The Krulak commandancy produced the following enhancements to the Gray doctrine publications. Marine Corps, *Warfighting,* Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication (MCDP 1) PCN 142 000006 00, 20 June 1997. Marine Corps, *Strategy,* Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication (MCDP 1-1) PCN 142 000007 00 20 12 November 1997. Marine Corps,

General Krulak's Foreword to MCDP-1 acknowledged that the current and emerging concepts of operational maneuver from the sea derived their doctrinal and philosophical foundation from Gray's Warfighting FMFM-1. He also stated that military doctrine cannot be allowed to stagnate—especially a dynamic doctrine like maneuver warfare. Doctrine must continue to evolve within the Marine Corps based on growing experience, advancements in theory, and the changing face of war itself. His goals were to enhance the description of the nature of war, to clarify the descriptions of the styles of warfare, and to clarify and refine important maneuver warfare concepts like commander's intent, main focus of effort, and critical vulnerability, all while retaining the spirit, style, and essential message of FMFM-1. General Al Gray's Preface offers his hearty and glowing endorsement of General Krulak's MCDP revisions. General Gray continued by stating that war is both timeless and ever-changing. While the basic nature of war is constant, he explained, the means and methods we use must evolve continuously.[19]

Like war itself, our approach to warfighting must evolve continuously. The Gray imprimatur and initial guidance of fighting smarter continued this evolution into the Marine Corps' ethos, education, and training. Commandant Krulak was so intent on furthering the influence of FMFM-1 that he added two additional publications during his tenure as commandant: *Warfighting Cliff Notes* and *Operational Maneuver from the Sea*.[20]

Before the completion of his term as commandant, General Krulak also provided two ideas that revolve around the Marine Corps' new understanding of maneuver warfare. The coining of the terms "The Strategic Corporal" and the "Three Block War" was an extension of the maneuver warfare tenets at the center of the Gray effort to keep the Corps at the tip of the military spear. The "Three Block War concept illustrates the complex spectrum of challenges

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Campaigning, Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication (MCDP 1-2) PCN 142 000008 00 20 1 August 1997. Marine Corps, *Tactics,* Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication (MCDP 1-3) PCN 142 000002 00 20 30 July 1997.

19 Boyd, "this is just the beginning and change would always be part of the process." This also answers the critics concerning the evolution of maneuver warfare by the US Marine Corps.

20 Marine Corps, *Warfighting Cliff Notes,* Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication (MCDP Synopsis of MCDP 1: *Warfighting*), May 10, 1998; Marine Corps, *Operational Maneuver from the Sea,* Distribution 145 00000100, January 4, 1996.

likely to be faced by all Marines on the modern battlefield.[21] In Krulak's timeless example, Marines may be required to conduct full-scale military action, peace-keeping operations, and humanitarian assistance simultaneously within three contiguous city blocks. The thrust of the concept is that modern militaries must be trained to operate in all three conditions, and in order to do so, leadership training at the lowest levels needs to be a high priority, something that convinced Krulak to call out the "Strategic Corporals."[22] These young Marines are the low-level unit leaders able to take independent action and make major decisions as the battlespace and tempo reshaped itself. This is also a core function of commander's intent, albeit in real time. Thus Krulak extended free thinking and fighting smarter in the utilization of a Marine Corps Way of War.

The continuation of the institutionalization of maneuver warfare was carried to the next level by the next commandant, General James L. Jones, with his timely 2001 publication of *Marine Corps Operations* in MCDP-1-0.[23] The progression was clearly toward the aspects of maneuver warfare in the combined arms section of the Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF). This describes the role of the Marine component in providing, sustaining, and deploying Marine Corps forces at the operational level of war. It also directs how the MAGTF conducts expeditions at the operational and tactical levels. In essence, this document is the continued evolution of a Marine Corps Way of War that is philosophically based in maneuver warfare as it applies to expeditionary maneuver warfare and its supporting concept, operational maneuver from the sea.

The other major development to enhance the basis of maneuver warfare under the Jones' commandancy was the incorporation of the V-22 Osprey, a hybrid airframe used for the combined-arms air component. The Osprey enables and enhances the concept of MAGTF to be extended well beyond the 200-mile mark for Marine Corps' insertion of troops. The use of the V-22 enhances maneuver warfare because it can deliver Marines at speeds equivalent to traditional airframes instead of the slower helicopters. This adds

21 General Charles Krulak CMC, "The Strategic Corporal: Leadership in the Three Block War," *Marines Magazine*, January 1999.

22 Krulak, "The Strategic Corporal."

23 Marine Corps, *Marine Corps Operations,* Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication (MCDP 1-0) PCN 142 000014 00, September 27, 2001.

to the rapid tempo of attacks and helps shape the battlespace. This has increased the vertical as well as horizontal application of envelopment and rapid tempo and has become the compliment to a fighting smarter MCWW.

The next commandant was General Michael W. Hagee. According interviews with Generals Conway, Mattis, and John Kelly, the practice of Marine Corps maneuver warfare tenets were applied in both Iraq and Afghanistan under Hagee's commandancy.[24] As for the furtherance of the institutionalization of "fighting smarter," General Hagee revamped the Commandant's Required Reading List. According to General Hagee, "Warfighting excellence demands that our Marines not only maintain physical endurance and technical proficiency, but just as importantly, they also continue to develop intellectual adaptability along with effective problem solving skills."[25]

All-Marine Message 007 05 announced an updated Marine Corps professional reading program. This was a first step in reinvigorating a key element of Marine Professional Military Education (MPME), explained the general. The revised program maintains an emphasis on warfighting and is designed to instill wisdom and judgment needed in a MCWW.

In November 2006, a panel of retired and active duty military personnel met to update the professional reading program (the Commandant's Reading List). "There were 112 separate books on its required reading list—45 for the enlisted reading list and 83 for the officer list, with 16 books shared between the two groups. The panel concluded that revisions were necessary to reinvigorate the program. The strategic environment is ever-changing, they explained, and will become progressively more complex and challenging.[26]

General Hagee approved the revised program and viewed it as a clear continuation of Gray's reading program designed to promote lifelong learning. He recognized that full implementation of this goal, however, would require a new sense of ownership and creative inspiration. "All Marines must develop a disciplined approach to studying, thinking, and discussing our profession, fully fostering a higher level of shared competency within our Corps," argued

24 Interviews by author with Generals Conway, Kelly, and Mattis.

25 Puryear, *Marine Corps Generalship*, 270.

26 General Hagee, *ALMAR 007 05* (Unclassified message to: ALL Marines, 8 Feb 2005). Boyd: "this is just the beginning and change would always be part of the process." This also answers the critics concerning the continued evolution of maneuver warfare by the US Marine Corps.

General Hagee. "In addition, we will not achieve continuous improvement in warfighting proficiency without guided professional growth and a sense of comradeship that only leaders at all levels can instill. The revised reading list has a number of books assigned to multiple ranks and provides a starting point for these goals. The selected books," he continued, "will facilitate a common understanding, stimulate intellectual curiosity, and enhance unit cohesion. But a reading list is not enough. The readings become more meaningful when discussed with others.[27]

"While the individual books give Marines historically based information that emphasizes warfighting, the discussion of the readings among Marines that follows, properly contextualizes the works and place them in the proper perspective," explained the president of the Marine Corps University, General Donald Gardner USMC (Ret.). He continued:

> The group discussions serve to encourage critical thinking skills, create an environment where ideas are introduced and debated, promote higher levels of professional understanding, and raise the intellectual bar of the individual Marine. Those who lack sufficient understanding of the lessons learned in the various works would gain greater comprehension by listening to their peers discuss the material in a manner that they can easily grasp. This approach fosters both unit cohesion and intellectual development, whereas the prior programs only seemed to increase an individual Marine's knowledge of a particular topic.
>
> One of the key components in emphasizing a discussion-focused program is selecting appropriate works that are both timeless and relevant to today's geostrategic environment. In addition to classical works, the program now contains contemporary works that emphasize terrorism and the Middle East, such as *The Arab Mind*, *From Beirut to Jerusalem*, and *Terrorism Today*. Both sets of books encompass broad topics and are timeless in application. Furthermore, works such as *The Face of Battle*, *This Kind of War*, *Rifleman Dodd*, and others are found on both enlisted and officer lists because these books apply across the board and demonstrate sound lessons on basic leadership for all Marines. It is important to note that the works in the program are not set in stone. While all of the selections are essentially timeless and formative in relation to their academic standing, the program will not remain stagnant in terms of its composition. Marine Corps University now manages the Professional Reading

27 Puryear, *Marine Corps Generalship*, 271.

Program and will establish a Board to make recommendations concerning what material will best meet the program's enduring objectives in the future.

The senior leadership chose to attack the stagnation of the reading program at a crucial time in our Corps' history. By placing this program at the forefront of his agenda, General Hagee insisted upon high intellectual standards during a time that requires mental agility and analytical versatility. Dialogue and discussion groups can facilitate the critical-thinking skills that are necessary for the professional growth and creativity of Marines, regardless of rank or background. Today's warfare continually demands flexibility and split-second decision-making skills from Marines at all levels. Thus, the Professional Reading Program serves as a mechanism to develop the individual Marine's intellectual framework and tactical calculations. The future of our Corps continues to depend on strong leadership and a prodigious pursuit of lifelong learning. This program seeks to encourage all Marines to become creative thinkers in an age where the individual Marine is faced with constant battlefield dilemmas.[28]

The Commandant's Reading List

General Hagee's objective in expanding the Professional Reading List in 2007 echoes the reason why General Gray originally published it in 1989. In his initiating documents, Gray identified six objectives for the Professional Reading Program in order to provide a continuum of study for all Marine leaders. These objectives remain unchanged and are reiterated as follows:

— To impart a sense of Marine values and traits;
— To increase knowledge of our profession;
— To improve analytical and reasoning skills;
— To increase capacity of using printed media as a means of learning and communication.
— To increase knowledge of our nation's institutions and the principles upon which our country and way of life were founded;
— To increase knowledge of the world's governments, culture, and geography.[29]

28 Ibid., 272.

29 Gray, interview with the author.

The Professional Military Education (PME) serves as a bridge between an understanding of the strategic landscape and the unique decision-making requirements for each combat situation. Today's strategic environment, characterized by uncertainty and lethality, requires leaders at all levels that are mentally as well as physically agile and capable of making difficult, timely decisions in the midst of complex and stressful situations. Repetitive and varying decision-making opportunities create competent judgment, flexibility, and adaptability. Field training and exercises are just one means to improve the thought processes. However, these opportunities will always be limited. The tremendous experiences that men and women have gained over the ages concerning the nature and conduct of war can, if properly studied and understood, serve as an important force multiplier providing myriad opportunities to "experience" decision-making in war.[30]

Discussions with many leaders during recent overseas operations confirm this assertion. "Success in battle depends on many things, some of which we will not fully control," explained General Al Gray. "However," he continued,

> the state of preparedness of our Marines (physical, intellectual, psychological, operational) is in our hands. The study of our profession through selected readings will assist each Marine's efforts to achieve operational competence and to better understand the nature of our "calling" as Leaders of Marines.[31]

> A perfect list is always subject to debate and discussions; but that spirit of discussion is what is required to achieve a shared increase in our professional competency and foster increased cohesion of effort. The revised Professional Reading List meets the enduring objectives stated above and will greatly assist in achieving my guidance goal of excellence in warfighting through competence and comradeship. It was developed based on the following guidance:
>
> — The list does not incorporate fleeting trends;
> — It emphasizes Warfighting;
> — It is historically based;
> — It uses serious literature that has an established permanence;
> — It encompasses a broad context;

30 Puryear, *Marine Corps Generalship*, 272.

31 Gray, interview with the author.

— And, it is achievable by all Marines."[32]

The Commandant ordered that all Marines actively read and discuss books from the reading list. There is an intentional cross linkage of books between ranks to help achieve this goal, and discussion and dialog are considered the best means of increasing common understanding. Commandant Hagee offered some closing comments on these points:

> The emphasis of this program is on Warfighting. It is a dynamic program and recommendations and contributions that meet our objectives and my guidance are highly encouraged. I expect all Marines to continue their personal development through reading. I challenge each Marine to actively spend time preparing for the next battle. Prepare yourself in body, mind, and spirit. Share what you learn by discussing your reading with fellow Marines. By reading and discussing, you participate meaningfully in our Warfighting culture.
>
> Keep attacking,
>
> M.W. Hagee
> General, Marine Corps, Commandant of the Marine Corps [33]

CMC Generals Hagee and Conway supported this educational warfighting philosophy while the 35th Commandant, General James F. Amos (USMC ret.) revamped the reading program in the spirit of furthering the intellectual development of all Marines. The original list was created by Colonel Paddy Collins and then-Major John Kelly in 1990–91. General Kelly, who served for a short time as Secretary of Homeland Security under President Donald Trump and is currently serving as his White House Chief of Staff, detailed this development during a recent interview:

> So I [Gen. Kelly] get promoted. I go to TBS [The Basic School]. Lucky enough to get assigned there when Gray becomes the commandant and he then goes to TBS at Quantico and says to the CO at Quantico, Paddy Collins, a fascinating Marine of old,

32 Hagee, *ALMAR,* and Puryear, *Marine Corps Generalship*, 270. The titles on the most current Commandant's Reading list are found at the end of this chapter.

33 Hagee, *ALMAR 007/05*.

colonel, and he was one of the henchmen that—and I say that in a positive sense—that Gray hired to make these changes and to make them in a draconian way: We're going to make this happen in the Marine Corps. So Paddy comes down to TBS. He has a TBS CO and a bunch of us. I was a major at the time, a brand new major. And he starts in. This was about '90, '91.... I guess. This is what the commandant wants and you guys are going to do it and its maneuver warfare and so on and you're going to write it. And oh, by the way, he wants a book list. He wants a reading list... a reading program.

And so he leaves and a good friend that was a CO at The Basic School, Terry Ebert at the time said: "Does anyone know what the hell he was talking about? What is this maneuver warfare thing? What is this?" And I said, "I do." And so I became the front guy at The Basic School and when Paddy left, he said, "And by the way, he wants the reading list this week." So I went home and literally wrote down every book on my shelf which were several hundred on 3x5 cards and then came in and met with Paddy Collins at Headquarters Marine Corps and I said, "Okay, this is what I think the program should be and the reason I did 3 x 5 cards was because I thought that we could arrange the books in like what should a private through lance corporal [should] read. That would be a different reading than what the corporal and sergeant should read. Corporal, sergeant, staff sergeant, and oh, by the way, those lieutenants should read those books too. And that's where the captains, the majors and all of that. And it went from soup to nuts. *The Marine*, by Drew Davis, books about Chesty Puller are on the list. Everyone ought to read that one, their PFC's. Easy read book and it's about one of our great heroes, all the way to Dowdy's book on futuristic warfare and all of this and everything in between.

And so we presented that to the TBS CO. I arranged the cards and the commandant looked at it and said, "Publish it." General Van Riper was a one star at the time at Quantico and he looked at the number. He couldn't add a book to the list so that became the reading list and the reading program the next day essentially. They published it —they went to work on it a couple of weeks later. It came out in a letter and said okay, this is it. And we should be reading constantly, all the time. And that's where the reading program came from.[34]

In the quarter-century since this development, the Marine Corps has fostered a reading program for its warriors focusing on the profession of arms

34 Kelly, interview with the author.

that has set apart these warfighters while further enhancing maneuver warfare or the "fighting smarter" philosophy. Without these educated warriors, the Marine Corps Way of War quite possibly would not exist.

The Reading List

The Professional Reading list is a component of the Professional Reading Program (part of the Professional Education Program). It serves as a standardized guide that provides a common understanding throughout the Marine Corps and stimulates intellectual curiosity. A number of books are on the reading list of multiple ranks for the benefit of all in each audience.

The following is the most current list available at the time this book was submitted to the publisher, formatted by title and author only:[35]

Privates / Pvt. First Class / Lance Corporals: *A Message to Garcia*, Hubbard; *Blackhawk Down*, Bowden; *Rifleman Dodd*, Forester; *The Defense of Duffer's Drift*, Swinton; *The Killer Angels*, Shaara; *The Soldier's Load*, Marshall; *United States Constitution*.

Corporals / Sergeants: *Battle Leadership*, Von Schell; *Fields of Fire*, Webb; *Flags of Our Fathers*, Bradley; *Gates of Fire*, Pressfield; *The Bridge at Dong Ha*, Miller; *The Last Full Measure*, Shaara; *The Red Badge of Courage*, Crane; *The United States Marines: A History*, Simmons; *Tip of the Spear*, Michaels; *With The Old Breed at Pelelieu and Okinawa*, Sledge.

Staff Sergeants: *Attacks!*, Rommel; *Pegasus Bridge*, Ambrose; *Phase Line Green: The Battle for Hue 1968*, Warr; *The Arab Mind*, Patai; *The Art of War*, Sun Tzu (Griffin); *The Forgotten Soldier*, Sajer; *The Village*, West; *This Kind of War*, Fehrenbach; *We Were Soldiers Once*, Moore and Galloway.

Gunnery Sergeants: *Breakout*, Russ; *Citizen Soldiers*, Ambrose; *Command in War*, Van Creveld; *My American Journey*, Powell; *Navajo Weapon*, McClain; *Savage Wars of Peace*, Boot; *Semper Fidelis: The History of the Marine Corps*, Millet; *Unaccustomed to Fear*, Willcock.

35 Puryear, *Marine Corps Generalship*, 270.

Master Sergeants / 1st Sergeants: *Band of Brothers*, Ambrose; *Bayonet Forward!*, Chamberlain; *Defeat into Victory*, Slim; *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, Lawrence; *Strong Men Armed*, Leckie; *The Face of Battle*, Keegan; *The Mask of Command*, Keegan; *War in the Shadows*, Asprey.

Master Gunnery Sergeants / Sergeant Majors: *First to Fight*, Krulak; *Fortune Favors the Brave*, Myers; *No Bended Knee*, Twining; *Reminiscences of a Marine*, Lejeune.

Warrant Officer - 1: *Leading Marines: MCWP 6-11 Small Wars Manual*, *The Armed Forces Officer*, Marshall; *The Quiet American*, Greene; *Victory at High Tide*, Heinl.

Midshipmen and Officer Candidates: *Message to Garcia*, Hubbard; *Beat to Quarters*, Forester; *Chesty*, Hoffman, *The United States Marines: A History*, Simmons; *Warfighting MCDP 1*.

2nd Lieutenants: *Cleared Hot*, Stoffey; *Chancellorsville*, Sears, *Fields of Fire*, Webb; *On Infantry*, English and Gudmundsson; *Rifleman Dodd*, Forester; *The Arab Mind*, Patai; *The Easter Offensive*, Turley; *The Face of Battle*, Keegan; *This Kind of War*, Fehrenbach.

1st Lieutenants / Chief Warrant Officer-2: *A People Numerous and Armed*, Shy; *All For The Union*, Rhodes; *Attacks!*, Rommel; *Company Commander*, Macdonald; *Once an Eagle*, Myrer; *Reminiscences of a Marine*, Lejeune; *The Forgotten Soldier*, Sajer; *The Storm of Steel*, Junger; *The Ugly American*, Lederer and Burdick; *Utmost Savagery*, Alexander.

Captains / Chief Warrant Officer-3: *Command in War*, Van Creveld; *Eagle Against The Sun*, Specter; *Field Artillery and Firepower*, Bailey; *Fields of Battle*, Keegan; *From Beirut to Jerusalem*, Friedman; *Goodbye Darkness*, Manchester; *Infantry in Battle*, Marshall; *Savage Wars of Peace*, Boot; *Stonewall in the Valley*, Tanner; *Terrorism Today*, Harmon; *The Art of War*, Sun Tzu; *Unaccustomed to Fear*, Willcock.

Majors / Chief Warrant Officer-4: *A Bright Shining Lie*, Sheehan; *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*, McPherson; *Crucible of War*, Anderson; *European Armies*, Strachan; *For the Common Defense*, Millet and Maslowski; *Grant Takes Command*, Catton; *On War*, Von Clausewitz; *Strategy*, Hart; *The General*, Forester;

The Glorious Cause, Middlekauff; *The Guns of August*, Tuchman; *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, Thucydides (Landmark version by Strasser); *The Mask of Command*, Keegan.

Lieutenant Colonels/ Chief Warrant Officer-5: *A Revolutionary People at War*, Royster; *Defeat into Victory*, Slim; *Frontiersmen in Blue*, Utley; *Masters of War*, Handel; *One Hundred Days*, Woodward; *Patton: A Genius for War*, d'Este; *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, Lawrence; *The Army in Viet Nam*, Krepinevich; *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, Friedman; *The Roots of Blitzkrieg*, Corum; *Supplying War*, van Creveld.

Colonels through Generals: *Abraham Lincoln and the Second American Revolution*, McPherson; *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Remarque; *Carnage and Culture*, Hanson; *Crusade in Europe*, Eisenhower; *Dereliction of Duty*, McMaster; *Diplomacy*, Kissinger; *Eisenhower's Lieutenants*, Weigley; *Fleet Tactics and Coastal Combat*, Hughes; *Feeding Mars*, Lynn; *Generalship: Its Diseases and Their Cures*, Fuller; *Inventing Grand Strategy and Teaching Command*, Sumida; *Memoirs of General W. T. Sherman*, McFeely, ed.; *Military Innovation in the Interwar Period*, Murray and Millet; *Supreme Command*, Cohen; *The Campaigns of Napoleon*, Chandler; *The Conduct of War*, Fuller; *The Rape of Nanking*, Chang; *War and Peace*, Tolstoy.

Chapter 6

Small Wars and Humanitarian Assists, 1991–2001

The concept of a "Force in Readiness" is the Marine Corps' sweet spot, regardless of the type of action required to complete a particular mission. This chapter's main focus is on the strategy and tactics used by the Marine Corps, and the application of maneuver warfare regarding the military and humanitarian assistance actions from the post–Desert Storm period through to the start of *Operation Enduring Freedom* in 2001.

As discussed earlier, there are three accepted warfare philosophies today:

1. Attritional Warfare;
2. Revolutionary or Irregular Warfare;
3. Maneuver Warfare.

The two decades under consideration exemplify what has been called "Small Wars"–type deployments. For the Corps, this meant a projection of force in what could be considered an emergency use of military assets to either join in combat or carry out life-sustaining operations in times of natural- or man-made disaster. The term "Small Wars" was defined in the 1940 Marine Corps publication *Small Wars Manual* as follows:

The term "Small War" is often a vague name for any one of a great variety of military operations. As applied to the United States, small wars are operations undertaken under executive authority, wherein military force is

combined with diplomatic pressure in the internal or external affairs of another state whose government is unstable, inadequate, or unsatisfactory for the preservation of life and of such interests as are determined by the foreign policy of our Nation.[1]

It is important to note this was written and published during the post "Banana Wars" era. The kinetic memory of those Marine deployments was still fresh in the DNA of the Corps' "Small Wars" history. The publication defined the philosophy, tactics, campaigning, and strategy eventually incorporated into the Maneuver Warfare doctrine refined and enhanced by General Gray and his cadre of "evolutionists." It was during the Gray Commandancy that the *Small Wars Manual* was reprinted and redistributed to all Marines.[2] It found its way into the military environments of *Operation Enduring Freedom* and *Operation Iraqi Freedom*. A redefined joint *Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual* was co-authored by General David Petraeus (U.S. Army, Ret.) and General James Amos (Marine Corps Asst. Commandant, Ret.) and published in 2007. It is important to note that roughly 90 percent of the *Counterinsurgency Field Manual* comes from the original Marine Corps 1940 *Small Wars Manual*.[3]

Over its long and successful history, the Marine Corps integrated the maneuver warfare doctrine, strategy, and tactics into its combat and humanitarian assist approaches. This concept is nothing more than a clever manner in which to gain the upper hand during any adversarial event. An "adversary" can be anything from an armed enemy to natural or man-made disasters—or both. Maneuver warfare, therefore, can be expressed through military actions and non-military (humanitarian) assistance operations. In either case the success of maneuver warfare depends upon the use of the following principles:

1 *Small Wars Manual*, 1-1, 1.

2 Formally available as NAVMC 2890, *Small Wars Manual*, originally printed in 1940. This was reprinted at the direction of Gen. Gray CMC, Marine Corps Combat Development Group, (Quantico VA: 1990).

3 Conway interview with the author.

1. The military force that applies this form of warfare has to be decentralized;[4]

2. If an action has to be communicated to the highest rank, the final decision must then be transmitted all the way back down through the process and will prove time consuming and ineffective;

3. Time is a major aspect of every military operation; maneuver is about gaining a time advantage over the opposing military or the effects of a non-military event;

4. Decisions have to be made as per the situation,[5] and then communicated later up the chain of command. This is done in order to give the headquarters a gist of the unit's performance so it can carry out its oversight role effectively;

5. Maneuver warfare is characterized by a disorganized approach to combat, so the military has to be ready to adopt and work with and within the disorder and chaos;[6]

6. Communication through the entire rank is at times decentralized since it is hard to tell what path the action is taking from the components of higher ranks;

7. Spreading confusion or chaos to the enemy gives the attacking military an advantage over the opposing military;[7]

8. Operating under such chaotic conditions can take its toll on the attacking military as well;

9. There should never be a set battlespace formula. The military's actions are to remain unpredictable to the opposition;

10. It is important to remain as subtle as possible and always keep the opponent guessing;[8]

11. In humanitarian assistance actions, speed rather than deception is the desired outcome.

4 Lind, "Maneuver Warfare Handbook," 13. This concept of NCO's making key decisions was further developed by General Charles Krulak's "Strategic Corporal."

5 This concept of NCO's making key decisions was further developed by General Charles Krulak's "Strategic Corporal."

6 Mattis, telephone interview with author.

7 Conway and Kelly, interviews with the author.

8 Mattis and Gray, interviews with the author. This is also a derivative of the incorporation of the Asian military philosopher Sun Tzu's concepts applied to the Boydian posture of warfighting. Sun Tzu, *The Art of War,* trans. Ralph D. Sawyer and Mei-chun Lee Sawyer (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1994), 134-137.

The Marine Corps has used this approach in most of its operations. The primary operations addressed in this chapter include: *Operation Provide Comfort* (Iraq); *Operation Fiery Vigil* (Philippines); the Los Angeles Riots; *Operation Restore Hope* (Somalia); *Operation Deny Flight* (Balkans); *Operation Distant Runner* (Rwanda/Burundi); *Operation Uphold Democracy* (Haiti); Liberia; Central African Republic; Albania; Sierra Leone; Eritrea; *Operation Desert Fox* (Iraq); *Operation Allied Force* (Balkans); and in East Timor.

"I think the Marine Corps was actually very, very maneuverish prior to World War II, and a lot of that just had to do with the nature of warfare in the Caribbean and the fact that we didn't have—this is, I think, important—any written doctrine," explained General John Kelly as he reflected on "Small Wars" and the importance of them to the development of the Marine Corps. The general continued:

> The Marine Corps really didn't have truly written [code or doctrine] except we had a *Small Wars Manual*. The *Small Wars Manual* is mostly a discussion about warfare but there's no "how to" in the suggestions about it.
>
> Even if you go back to World War I, as we prepared to go overseas, we essentially were taught methodical warfare by the attritionists in it and that is the French. And so from that we fell in on the French style of warfare in World War I. But then when we came out of that, totally methodical—the firepower intensive and all that
>
> And then when we came out of that and operated in the Caribbean, we just had a bunch of NCO's and young officers who were doing warfare and thinking through the challenges they had with no written doctrine. *Small Wars Manual* gets written, which didn't then pertain to World War II really. But you had a bunch of guys, NCO's and young officers, who had been in the Caribbean fighting and thinking and adjusting and they were very intellectually agile guys.
>
> So we took that jungle war experience to the first Marine Corps battle, Guadalcanal, and we were very good at it. We were very, very, very good. The Japanese were supposed to be the best jungle fighters in the world and the first time they met Americans on a battlefield they met their match in the U.S. Marines because of the

experiences coming out of the '20s and '30s from Haiti and Nicaragua and Dominican Republic, all that.[9]

The lessons learned from small wars and humanitarian assistance throughout the 20th century continued to help the Corps institutionalize maneuver warfare into a Marine Corps Way of War.

Operation Provide Comfort (Iraq)

The 1980s to 1990s witnessed the excessively cruel reign of Saddam Hussein in Iraq. He inflicted immense suffering during his dictatorship and inflicted a host of atrocities on the citizens of Iraq. The ethnic group that suffered the most under Saddam was the Kurdish minority in northeast Iraq. The Kurds were a segregated people whose lives revolved around tribal loyalties. Their undying loyalty to their heritage earned them the enmity and animosity from other Iraqi tribal and political groups and from Saddam's Ba'athist regime in particular. The dictator unleashed a deadly campaign of ethnic cleansing that ultimately employed chemical warfare. He escalated his brutality in the spring of 1991 when the Kurds openly revolted against his Ba'athist regime. Many thousands of Kurdish men, women, and children perished.[10]

As the suffering escalated, the Kurds fled Iraq for neighboring countries. Some transferred to refugee camps in the rugged mountainous regions of Turkey. The Turks were not enthusiastic about accepting the influx of Kurdish refugees, but buckled under international pressure. The temperatures there were often below the freezing point and famine, coupled with poor sanitation, spread disease. As their relationship with the Turkish government became more strained, the Kurds' plight caught global attention and became the focus of the United Nations.[11]

In 1991, President George H. W. Bush ordered the formation of a Joint Task Force (JTF) to protect the Iraqi Kurds. This military action was

9 Kelly, interview with the author.

10 Edward Wong, "Chemical Weapons: As Trial Begins, Poison Attack Haunts Kurds," *New York Times,* August 21, 2006, National Edition, World, A1.

11 Department of the Army, *Operation Provide Comfort, Humanitarian Intervention: Assisting the Iraqi Kurds in Operation Provide Comfort, 1991,* CMH Pub 70–78–1, 29.

designated *Operation Provide Comfort*. Its principal objectives were to enable the Iraqi Kurds to return home and to live in peace, free from oppression and free to lead their own lives. *Operation Provide Comfort* revolved around the delivery of humanitarian aid in the demilitarized zone as JTF fighter planes patrolled the skies above Iraq's 36th parallel to keep away hostile forces.[12]

The 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) and a battalion of the Army's 325th Airborne Infantry were transported to Zakhu, Iraq, and named JTF Bravo. In addition to overseeing the return of the Kurds to their homes JTF Bravo was tasked with building resettlement camps where the Kurds would have access to food, water, sanitation, and security, handling unexploded ordnance within the camp, and creating avoidance awareness of these explosives.

It was difficult for JTF Bravo to promote peace while simultaneously warding off the Iraqi Army, which posed potential assault threats at every opportunity. Instead of engaging the enemy with military force, however, the Marines resorted to a peaceful but aggressive means of approaching their mission called "aggressive restraint." The Marines would not, of course, condone any Iraqi attacks, but at the same time allowed the Iraqi military to withdraw peacefully from the Kurdistan region in this post-Gulf War I environment. This was essential because the Marines were at a numerical disadvantage during this operation. This concept is a prime tenet of maneuver warfare: refusing to give battle unless it is to the benefit of the aggressor (in this case, the Marine Corps).[13]

The Marines also involved the Kurds in the decision-making process and the Kurdish resettlement plan, as well as in the participation in the construction of their settlements. This quickly developed Kurdish loyalty and gave the Marines an advantage over the Iraqi Army by winning the support of the population. It was a subtle way of bringing maneuver warfare to humanitarian assistance. In fact, it was a page taken from the *Small Wars Manual* and the accompanying DNA of the Marine Corps. *Operation Provide Comfort* integrated a sub-operation named *Encourage Hope*. This was mainly concerned with psychological aid for the refugees, and its integration made

12 Ibid., 42.

13 Brown, "*Humanitarian Operations in Northern Iraq 1991: With Marines in Operation Provide Comfort 1995*," 18.

Operation Provide Comfort one of the most successful Marine Corps operations in the history of humanitarian assistance.[14]

Operation Fiery Vigil (Philippines)

Mount Pinatubo, a volcano that had been dormant for 600 years, erupted in the Philippines on June 15, 1991. The volcano sent ash and smoke 40,000 feet into the air, plunging the Philippine island of Luzon into darkness. For the next two days lava flowed out of the mountain, completely covering the landscape. A typhoon hit the coastal area of the Philippines, mixing rainwater with the ash suspended in the air to give the appearance it was raining mud. The weight of this mixture collapsed roofs and caused other major damage. The ash that had settled around the mountain also mixed with the water and flowed down the Pinatubo River. In response to this growing humanitarian crisis, a Marine Corps military contingent was deployed made up of 6,000 Marines and sailors from the III MEF and Marine Barracks at Subic Bay Naval Base. Its mission was to help the 50,000 U.S servicemen and their dependents as well as the many thousands of Filipinos displaced by the natural disaster.[15]

Operation Fiery Vigil was led by the Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) 4-90, with Col. Marshall B. Darling in command. MAGTF 4-90 was later joined by the 15th MEU and MAGTF 2-91, led by Col. Terrence P. Murray and Lt. Col. Larry E. Johnson, respectively. Despite its recent departure from the Gulf War, the III MEF would now aid in the relief effort by delivering needed supplies to the suffering Philippines.[16]

The Marines had several missions during the operation that entailed assisting topographical experts in studying the volcanic activity, conducting surveys to determine where mudflows were likely to develop, deploying security detachments, constructing potable water units, distributing food, overseeing evacuations, repairing power sources, and conducting cleanup operations. Marine Corps helicopters involved in the evacuation included

14 *Small Wars Manual*, 17-32.

15 Adam B. Siegel, Requirements for Humanitarian Assistance and Peace Operations: Insights From Seven Case Studies, *Center for Naval Analyses* (Alexandrea VA: 1995), 71.

16 Matthew Robinson, Operation Fiery Vigil: Philippine Relief Effort 1991, *Marine Corps Gazette*; Nov 1991; 75, 11; 110.

HMH-772, based with MAGTF-36 on Okinawa, backed by HMM-163 from the 15th MEU and Helicopter Squadron 12 from the carrier USS *Midway*.

The entire evacuation stage was completed by July 28. The speed and agility evident during the operation provided a vital insight into maneuver warfare as applied to humanitarian assistance. In this case, a high rate of tempo paid off for the Marines when an estimated 20,000 people were evacuated from the Luzon. A majority of these evacuees were sent to displacement centers on Cebu aboard Seventh Fleet ships that had also been dispatched to help. Other evacuees boarded aircraft for the United States, after a short stopover at Guam for processing. Even though it was damaged, the naval base at Subic Bay was in operation during the entire relief operation. The employment of MAGTF 4-90 and MAGTF 2-91 demonstrated the relevance of maneuver warfare in this combined air, land, and sea humanitarian operation. The Marine Air Ground Task Force is an asset of the Maritime Prepositioning Force (MPF) program whose main characteristic is its ability to respond quickly to all incidents ranging from humanitarian operations to main theater warfare efforts.[17]

The Los Angeles Riots

On March 3, 1991, just three months before Mount Pinatubo erupted, members of the Los Angeles Police Department engaged in an intense car chase across LA County with Rodney King, an African-American. A witness videoed the arrest effort after King was caught, and the tape was made available to the local TV station, KTLA. The video showed King being struck by police batons more than fifty times, with more than twenty officers present at the scene. King sustained serious injuries including twelve fractures. He was released without any charges being pressed against him and the arresting officers were charged by an LA grand jury in connection with the incident. The judge in the case, who had access to and knowledge of the events that had transpired before the famous film clip, declined to press charges against 17 officers who watched the incident, including the four officers who had administered the beating. In a change of venue, the four officers who had beat King were also later acquitted.

17 Colonel Carl D. Matter, Maritime Prepositioning: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow in *National Security Challenges for the 21st Centuy*, Williamson Murry, Ed., (Carlisle, PA.: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2003), 266. www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/2003/ssi_murray.pdf, accessed May 20 2014.

The legal rulings triggered a widespread riot in Los Angeles County, instigated by its black minority population. The tipping point of the riots, which included murder and mass arson and robbery, was reached when a white truck driver who had nothing to do with the original incident was pulled out of his truck and almost beaten to death with a brick by out-of-control rioters. Governor Pete Wilson declared a state of emergency and National Guard troops were called upon to contain the situation. Heavy patrols were authorized on the streets by the California National Guard (CANG) and a Marine Corps Reserve component. The Marines who were engaged did not escalate their actions in force projection levels. However, their mere presence on the streets provided enough incentive to keep the rioters at bay and prevented further looting and destruction of public and private property. With strategic locations and active neighborhood patrols, the Los Angeles streets calmed down.[18]

A key tenant in maneuver warfare is shaping the Area of Operational Responsibility (AOR) and then deciding when to offer force projection to an adversary. The Marine Corps Reserve component's posture acted as an intimidation measure for the rioters. In this regard, the riots came to a sudden end and law and order was restored.

A major part of *Warfighting* is imbued with not only Boyd's OODA Loop (observation, orientation, decision, and action), but also the Asian military philosophy of Sun Tzu, which teaches the importance of understanding one's adversary before thoughtful force projection is applied. In this case, the Marine Corps had the situation well in hand by not delivering force projection.[19]

Operations Deny Flight and *Allied Force* (Balkans)

Two different yet independent Marine Corps actions played out during the dissolution of Yugoslavia into its original ethnic entities. The first was *Operation Deny Flight*. Its importance for maneuver warfare applications is minimal, but when studied in conjunction with other Bosnian operations, it become clear that it helped shape this future battlefield and disrupt the actions and developments of the Bosnian Croats' and Serbs' war plans and strategy.

18 Jonathan Peterson etal, "South LA Burns and Grieves" *Los Angeles Times Archives*, May 1, 1992. National Edition: A1. http://graphics.latimes.com/riots-pages/#2, accessed, May 20, 2014.

19 FMFM1-3 "*Tactics*," 77-85.

The second and third operations—Bosnia, Kosovo and Albania, along with *Operation Allied Force*—are excellent examples of employing Marine Corps maneuver warfare in the area of combined arms as well as employing related strategy and tactics.[20]

Bosnia rests in the middle of the former Yugoslavia and is made up of three major socio-ethnic groups. Muslims comprised about 44 percent of the population, Christian Serbs 31 percent, and the Croats (mostly Roman Catholic) about 17 percent. The total population was roughly 4.6 million people. In 1992, a referendum seeking Bosnia-Herzegovina's independence from Yugoslavia was approved and fighting broke out. In a bid to expand the boundaries of their territories and link them, the Serbs embarked on a military campaign aimed at cleansing the Muslim population. This campaign entailed the extensive use of murder, rape, and forced relocation as a means of pushing the Muslims and Croats out of the territory the Christian Serbs believed was historically their own. The Bosnian Croats employed many of the same methods in the regions they sought to capture. The result was a Bosnia-Herzegovina thrown into a socio-ethnic bloodbath.[21]

The United Nations employed its UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in an attempt to bring the sectarian fighting to an end and restore peace, but there was insufficient political support from key countries in the European Union. Many believed Bosnian Serb position was too formidable to risk UN action. At first the United States also refused to engage in this conflict, but eventually the Clinton administration agreed to work alongside the French and the British in an effort to resolve it. The Bosnian Serbs were viewed as the war's initiators, but using extreme force against them was not condoned by the world court of public opinion, including a reconstituted post-Cold War Russia, which had maintained close ties with the Serbs and would never tolerate the use of such force against one of its allies. Acting within the limits of the UN mandate and resolutions remained the only option for the international body to retain its position of neutrality and still effectively employ its combined military power. These provisions led NATO to offer their air assets to UNPROFOR in October 1992.[22]

20 Hoffman, 642 -644. See also Simmons, et. al., "Air Operations over Bosnia," 339.

21 Chuck Sudetic, "Envoys Offer New Report of Serbian 'Ethnic Cleansing' in Bosnia," *New York Times,* Published: September 27, 1992, National edition, A1.

22 Sudetic, Ethnic Cleansing' in Bosnia, A1.

The mission of *Operation Deny Flight* revolved around three objectives. First and foremost was aerial monitoring to ensure adherence to UN Security Council Resolution 816, which enforced a ban on all fixed-wing and rotary-wing aircraft in the airspace of Bosnia-Herzegovina (also known as a "No-Fly Zone" or NFZ). Second, the operation was to provide protective air cover and close-air support on the ground upon request under the jurisdiction of the UN peacekeeping forces per the Security Council Resolutions 836, 958 and 981. Finally, it was to carry out airstrikes with UN approval against designated targets that put at risk the security of UN safe areas, including Bihac, Gorazde, Sarajevo, Srebenica, Tuzla, and Zepa.[23]

The Marine Corps' All Weather Attack Squadron 533 (MAWAS-533) commenced bombing missions in support of these UN resolutions. The attacks were aimed at preventing Serbian planes from assaulting the Bosnians (the Serbs had been violating the UN no-fly zone). The Ubdina airfield, used by the Serbs for their operations, was struck. The bombing sorties closed the airfield. When Serbian troops shelled the UN safe areas, we conducted airstrikes against the Pale ammunition storage bunkers. This, too, was given as a primary mission to the MAWAS.[24]

In addition, the 26th MEU was involved in active combat with the insurgents as the Marines prepared to utilize an amphibious landing from the USS *Kearsarge* Amphibious Ready Group anchored in the Adriatic Sea. The Marine Corps maneuver warfare doctrine ensures the training of Marine units as special operations capable in multiple missions. Marines must be ready for rapid deployment from the sea by immediate embarkation for land operations. This doctrine is especially important in a world where matters can get quickly out of hand. The MEU is a small unit made up of 2,000 Marines and sailors and is self-sustainable. The MEU is capable of projecting force to the limits of America's military arsenal in order to achieve any specific mission.[25]

The main objective of *Operation Allied Force* in the spring of 1999 was to destroy the military and security structure Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic had employed in the vast depopulation and extermination of the

23 Sudetic, Ethnic Cleansing' in Bosnia, A1.

24 Dean Simmons, Phillip Gold, Verena Vomatic, and Col. Philip Walsh, "Air Operations over Bosnia," in *Proceedings,* May 1, 1997, Vol. 123/5/1, 131. See www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/1997-05/air-operations-over-bosnia, accessed May 20, 2014.

25 Ibid.

Muslim Albanian majority in Kosovo. NATO goals to this end required airstrikes for as long as necessary until the Yugoslavian president satisfied the five peace conditions imposed on him. Foremost among them, Milosevic was to end all military actions and put an immediate stop to the violence and repression. Second, he had to withdraw Serbian military, police, and paramilitary troops from Kosovo. Third, he had to agree to allow an international military presence within Kosovo. Fourth, Milosevic would agree to the non-negotiable return of the refugees and displaced persons and uninterrupted access to them by humanitarian aid organizations. Finally, he was required to give credible assurance of his readiness to cooperate on the basis of the Rambouillet Accords in putting in place a political framework for Kosovo in compliance with international law and the charter of the United Nations.[26]

The enemy forces under Milosevic were composed of ground troops (including mechanized units), anti-aircraft troops, and a small but potent air force. The total composition of the enemy forces included 114,000 active-duty soldiers and 1,400 artillery specialists; 100 surface-to-air missiles (which posed a considerable threat to NATO airpower); 1,850 air defense artillery pieces (many were not as sophisticated as the STA missiles, yet still a threat to NATO aircraft). Their air force was made up of 240 planes ranging from MiG-21s and MiG-29s to 48 attack helicopters. The mechanized troops included 1,270 tanks consisting of T-72s, T-74s, T-55s, and M-84s. They also had 825 armored fighting vehicles. Moreover, there were about 40,000 Serb forces within and outside Kosovo equipped with tanks and APCs. The Serbian forces patrolling the Kosovo border had formed various units of reserve forces, deployed units, and garrison forces. The deployed forces were in possession of 96 tanks while the garrisons were equipped with 30 tanks. Serb troops had concentrated near the border Kosovo shared with Macedonia, and these forces increased as the weeks passed.[27]

On the 20th of May, the Marine All Weather Fighter Squadrons 332 and 533 commenced flights from Hungary in order to stand by as military operations began. The decision was made not to integrate ground forces in combat to keep NATO casualties as low as possible. This allowed Serbian

26 Martin J. Sullivan, "NATO, Serbia, and Operation Allied Force," *Marine Corps Gazette*, Nov. 2001, www.mca-marines.org/gazette/2001/11/nato-serbia-and-operation-allied-force, accessed May 20, 2014.

27 Keene, "The Quick, Deadly Trip to Kosovo," *Leatherneck Magazine*, August 1999.

fighters to take advantage of the unopposed battlespace, but it also exposed them to the airstrikes about to be conducted. Once more, the tenet of maneuver warfare about "when and how to give battle" was employed. NATO's air attacks proved overwhelming and the Serbian air defense was rendered ineffective. Serbian attacks were met with more airstrikes that eventually annihilated their air defense system, further shaping the battlefield for Marine maneuver.

In total, 70 Serbian aircraft were destroyed in this operation, five in air combat. Oil refineries were also destroyed to hinder Serbian operations by cutting off their fuel supply; on three occasions Serbian operations ground to a halt due to a lack of fuel. This was a direct manipulation of the Serbians' center of gravity by disrupting their already overburdened OODA Loops. Communication systems charged with the command and control of Serbian troops were equally disrupted on a large scale. Marine Corps forces did their best to isolate Yugoslav troops in Kosovo. This was accomplished by controlling the roads and rail links, and by disrupting field command posts. By May 22, in spite of some adverse weather conditions over Kosovo, NATO struck an artillery battery, six tanks, 23 vehicles, a column of troops, and a field command post. The Serbians finally withdrew, having incurred huge losses in terms of artillery and warfighters. Most of their munitions had been destroyed in the attacks and not much of their ground force was left to continue fighting. Their infrastructure had also been largely destroyed in this military campaign. They eventually withdrew from Kosovo.[28]

Operation Distance Runner (Rwanda and Burundi)

In 1994, Rwanda's population was close to seven million people made up of three ethnic tribes: Hutu (85%), Tutsi (14%) and Twa (1%). A group of Hutu extremists accused the Tutsi elite of being responsible for the social, economic, and political upheavals in Rwanda and also complained about their involvement with the rebel Rwandan Patriotic Front, which was mostly comprised of Tutsis. Rwandan President Habrayimana added to these issues by inciting the Tutsi community against the Hutu, which resulted in a rift between the two tribes. The Hutu lived in fear of the minority, based on their oppressive rule and government support.

28 Ibid.

When President Habrayimana's plane was shot down on April 6, 1994, violence erupted across the country. The Hutu formulated plans to wipe out the Tutsi. Any of the existing political leaders who may have averted the coming disaster were assassinated. The same was done to anyone who had in the past shown a particular dislike or disregard of Hutu extremist activities. Once they were sure no one would contain them, the Hutu embarked on a wave of genocide, killing anyone they thought was a Tutsi or had any affiliations with this minority tribe. Women and children were raped and murdered and entire families were wiped out. Over the following weeks an estimated 800,000 men, women, and children were killed—or more than one-half of the entire Tutsi population. Thousands of Hutu were also killed when they voiced opposition to the horrific genocide.[29]

A handful of Americans and other expatriates were caught up in the genocide and the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit stationed in Burundi's capital of Bujumbura was ordered to carry out an evacuation. On April 7 and 8, the 11th MEU evacuated all the American nationals caught up in the conflict that had partially spread to Bujumbura. The 330 Marines who flew 650 miles after taking off from the helicopter assault vessel USS *Peleliu* to Bujumbura crossed the Burundi border into Rwanda on April 12, where they rescued foreign citizens and U.S. nationals. The 11th MEU accomplished its evacuation mission in less than 24 hours. Throughout not a single military action was ordered or taken by the Marine Corps.[30]

Operation Uphold Democracy (Haiti)

In the December 1990 Haitian elections, former Catholic priest Jean-Bertrand Aristide garnered the majority of votes to become Haiti's president. However, his power was usurped through a military *coup d'état* and Joseph Nerette was installed as Haiti's next president. This led to the political destabilization of the country and eventual intersession by the United Nations.

29 Donatella Lorch, "Anarchy Rules Rwanda's Capital And Drunken Soldiers Roam City," *New York Times* on the web, April 14, 1994, www.nytimes.com/1994/04/14/world/anarchy-rules-rwanda-s-capital-and-drunken-soldiers-roam-city.html, accessed May 21, 2014.

30 Mike Stroup, "Africa: Operation Distant Runner Rescues Americans," *Leatherneck Magazine*, Vol. 77, Issue 8, www.mca-marines.org/leatherneck/1994/08/africa-operation-distant-runner-rescues-americans, accessed, May 21, 2014.

In June 1993, the United Nations voted to ban the import of oil and arms into Haiti to force a return to legitimate government. The Haitian people had suffered greatly at the hands of the Nerette military junta since it had ousted President Aristide.

The disenfranchised Haitians risked their lives on a daily basis in an effort to cross the sea to the United States to flee the terror reigning in their country. The Haitian refugees numbered roughly 21,000 daily, and the already poor Haitian economy went into a death spiral. Inflation rose about 40 percent, mostly the result of the oil and arms embargo put in place by the UN in accordance with Resolution 917. The UN efforts bore fruit when the survival of the military was threatened by impending attacks by United States forces together with other United Nations troops. Once the UN approved of military intervention, the Haitian government acquiesced. The military invasion was replaced by a humanitarian assistance operation lead by the U.S. to help the Haitian people, who were in dire need of food and medical relief.[31]

The U.S. Marine Forces Caribbean, based at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, were deployed to this region and conducted an amphibious entry into Haiti. The landing was made at Cap-Haitien from the amphibious assault ship USS *Wasp*.[32] Once within the country, the Marines provided security and humanitarian aid. The Marine patrols were enforced and the military junta toppled. The PSYOPs conducted proved effective in informing the Haitian people of the importance of a good government and the need for shunning future rebel activities.

During *Operation Uphold Democracy* the Marine Corps used the tenets of irregular warfare and maneuver from its *Small Wars Manual*, now endorsed by the Corps' new maneuver warfare philosophy. This was a further evolution of the principles originally learned and used by the Corps in the beginning of the 20th century in Haiti. Marine Corps history was repeating itself by having the

31 "Mission in Haiti; Aristide's Talk: 'Yes to Reconciliation," *New York Times on the Web*, October 5, 1994, www.nytimes.com/1994/10/05/world/mission-in-haiti- aristide-s-talk-yes-to-reconciliation.html, accessed May 21, 2014. See also, Herbert Friedman, "U.S PSYOP OPERATIONS (OPERATION UPHOLD DEMOCRACY," 2005), http://www.psywarrior.com/HerbHaiti.html, accessed May 21, 2014.

32 Thomas R. Wilson, "Joint Operations and Uphold Democracy 1995," *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Spring 1995, 54. http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a528898.pdf, accessed, May 21 2014.

Corps return, and by prosecuting its mission true to its previous (and now current) maneuver warfare DNA.[33]

Operation Assured Response (Liberia), and *Operation Quick Response* (Central African Republic)

In 1996, civil war broke out in the Republic of Liberia in Africa. This small-scale conflict quickly escalated into massive violence across the country. Within the first week of hostilities, 500 people flooded to the American Embassy grounds seeking refuge. Another 20,000 were huddled in the nearby embassy housing compound. In April 2006, the president of Liberia petitioned the U.S. Ambassador to request security aid, resupply, and evacuation of all foreign nationals in harm's way.[34]

Although the evacuation of Liberia was an urgent issue, the effort itself was an overall small operation. Marine Corps units from the USS *Guam* (LPH 5) and the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit (SOC) were ordered to Monrovia to conduct this mission. Upon arrival, the 22nd MEU's commanding officer took over the command of Joint Task Force Assured Response (JTF-AR). The JTF consisted of Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps personnel. With more support from the HC-4 MC-53 helicopter detachment and a number of both Navy and Marine aircraft, security at the embassy was enhanced and transportation began to normalize. More than 300 noncombatants, 49 of whom were from the United States, were successfully evacuated. Meanwhile, the USS *Portland* had dropped anchor some distance off the coast of West Africa to provide additional operational support. This combined arms application under Marine Corps guidance furthered the Marines' utilization of maneuver and the fighting smarter doctrinal philosophy. Just like Rwanda and Burundi, neither of these operations involved military actions. The quick response of the Marine Corps eliminated the need for force projection.[35]

33 Max Boot, *Invisible Armies* (New York: Liveright Publishing, 2013), 537-843. Also see Boot, *Savage Wars of Peace* (New York: Perseus Books, 2002).

34 Reuters, "Marines at U.S. Embassy in Liberia Again Fire on Gunmen," *New York Times,* May 7, 1996, www.nytimes.com/1996/05/07/world/marines-at-us-embassy-in-liberia-again-fire-on-gunmen.html, accessed, May 21, 2014.

35 Military: "Operation Assured Response," *Global Security*, www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/assured_response.htm, accessed, May 21, 2014.

In February 1996, the Central African Republic, a small landlocked country in the middle of the continent, found itself in a state of financial crisis. Payments to civil servants had been delayed for several months, and the unrest triggered some soldiers to rebel against the government. This mutiny was joined by other civil servants and the situation turned into one of mass protests and riots. The government, in turn, employed brutal measures to quell the surge of rioting in the capital of Bangui. The U.S ambassador's request for assistance arrived in the form of the 22nd Marines Expeditionary Unit, which was at the time was involved in *Operation Assured Hope* in neighboring Liberia.[36]

The MEU immediately began its execution of the evacuation orders, with a 35-man unit assigned to carry out the mission. The majority of this force consisted of riflemen from the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marines (2/2). The 2/2 boarded helicopters provided by the Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 162, with their destination the airport of Freetown, Sierra Leone. On arrival, Marine KC-130R flew the detachment into the Central African Republic, where U.S. State Department officials were waiting with evacuees. The quick offloading of the aircraft was immediately followed by the loading of American citizens and other foreign expatriates who were flown to Yaoundé in Cameroon.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Embassy was secured in Bangui and the Marines focused on subsequent evacuations. The Marines remained unshaken in the midst of the clashes between factions in the streets around them. Later, a second rifle platoon was flown in to reinforce a security unit already in place. Their positions were often hit by stray rounds, but the Marines and civilians seeking refuge were never in serious danger. Ultimately, the Central African Republic's Presidential Guard, in alliance with French paratroopers, restored order within the city. The last of the Marines left Bangui on the 22nd of July after having evacuated 448 people aboard Marine Corps and Air Force C-130s.[37]

36 Howard W. French, "Jean-Bedel Bokassa, Self-Crowned Emperor of the Central African Republic, Dies at 75," *New York Times,* November 5, 1996, www.nytimes.com/1996/11/05/world/jean-bedel-bokassa-self-crowned-emperor-central-african-republic-dies-75.html, accessed, May 21, 2014.

37 Craig Larson, "From 'Assured' to 'Quick' Response 22D MEU Evacuates Americans from the Central African Republic," *Leatherneck Magazine,* Vol. 79, Issue 7, www.mca-marines.org/leatherneck/1996/07/assured-quick-response-22d-meu-evacuates-americans-central-african-republic, accessed May 21, 2014.

Operation Noble Obelisk (Sierra Leone)

In 1997, Sierra Leone experienced yet another coup d'état. This one was staged by the army's junior officer cadre and led by 33-year-old Major Johnny Paul Koroma. The coup left 100 people dead and the city of Freetown at the mercy of this rogue military junta, common looters, and street gangs.

The Marine Corps' Amphibious Task Force from Camp Lejeune could quickly establish its presence in a conflict region without necessarily having to obtain permission or support of the host nation for overflight rights. The Marines made a landing in Freetown in spite of a flight ban by the junior officers who had forcefully removed President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah from power. The coup had plunged the country into political and social upheavals that raised the concern of the American government about the safety of its own citizens in Sierra Leone. A pre-dawn Marine rescue operation began after the release of helicopters from the USS *Kearsarge* anchored twelve miles offshore. Some 900 people were evacuated from the country, of whom 300 were Americans. All the evacuees were taken to Conakry, Guinea.[38]

Operation Safe Departure (Eritrea)

In 1998, Eritrea was caught up in the middle of a border dispute with Ethiopia, and American citizens and other foreign nationals were at risk of injury or death. The U.S. government moved to evacuate its nationals alongside citizens from other countries. The noncombatant operation that followed, *Operation Safe Departure*, took place in the Eritrean capital of Asmara. By the end of the operation, 167 people (including 107 Americans) had been safely evacuated.[39]

The 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) was deployed from its base at Camp Pendleton to carry out the rescue operation. The 11th MEU (SOC) was on a six-month deployment aboard the USS *Tarawa* Amphibious Ready Group, whose ships are usually home-ported in San Diego. Aside from the Tarawa, the Amphibious Ready Group consisted of the USS

38 Ibid.

39 "Eritrea's Chief Sees no Halt in Border War with Ethiopia," *NYT*, June 7, 1998, www.nytimes.com/1998/06/07/world/eritrea-s-chief-sees-no-halt-in-border-war- with-ethiopia.html, accessed, May 21, 2014.

Mount Vernon and USS *Denver*. The shore contingent was a Forward Command Element consisting of a support team and a liaison team. The evacuees were flown to Amman, Jordan, on KC-130 Hercules aircraft. The team consisted of 30 Marines and sailors plus a small security element drawn from the unit's infantry section.[40]

Operation Desert Fox (Iraq)

A special UN commission headed by Richard Butler, the Australian ambassador to the UN, had been set up to look into allegations that Iraq was manufacturing chemical and biological weapons. In 1998, Butler publicly asserted that he had been unable to satisfactorily carry out his investigations and that Iraq was concealing most of its illegally produced chemical and biological weapons. (Butler did not have concrete evidence to support his claims.) The turning point came on October 31, 1998, when Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein announced that the inspections would no longer be welcomed or tolerated. In response, President Bill Clinton declared that the inspections would go on even if it meant resorting to the use of force.[41]

Operation Desert Fox was slated to be a Marine Corps Air application in conjunction with the U.S. Navy and Air Force and the British Royal Navy. The Operation was designed to weaken Saddam's powerbase (his Republican Guards) and his cache of weapons of mass destruction. One hundred targets were assigned to tactical aviation (TacAir), the majority of which were large buildings, such as Republican Guard barracks, headquarters, and command-and-control sites consisting of radio relay towers and bunkers. The campaign was planned for concurrent naval TacAir/Tomahawk Land-Attack Missile (TLAM) strikes on the first night, followed up by combined TacAir (U.S./British) TLAM and Conventional Air-Launched Cruise Missile (CALCM) strikes the following three nights. Tomahawk and cruise missile

40 "Leathernecks Evacuate 172 from Eritrea," in *Leatherneck Magazine,* Vol. 81, Issue 8, www.mca-marines.org/leatherneck/1998/08/leathernecks-evacuate-172-eritrea, accessed May 21, 2014.

41 Steven Lee Myers and Barbara Crossette, "Iraq Accused of Arms Violations That Could Result in Air Strikes," *New York Times,* December 16, 1998, http://events.nytimes.com/learning/general/specials/iraq/981216iraq.html, ccessed May 21, 2014.

strikes were targeted locations heavily protected by Iraqi air defenses in and around Baghdad.[42]

The following account of the Marine Corps' mission was provided by Major Ross Roberts. A Marine aviator, Roberts was the operations officer for VMFA-312, a Marine F/A-18C squadron attached to CVW-3 and deployed aboard the USS *Enterprise* (CVN-65) during *Operation Desert Fox*. It is an invaluable account that is worth reproducing at length:[43]

> General Anthony Zinni, Marine Corps, Commander-in-Chief, Central Command, visited us on 10 December and gave us the news. He said the window of opportunity was here, and that "All of the slack has been removed from the trigger." Once again we were on the uphill climb of the emotional roller coaster that always accompanies preparations for combat. The decision to implement Desert Fox depended on Richard Butler's report to the United Nations scheduled for release on 15 December. On 14 December, we got the 72-hour warning order and broke out the target folders and strike plans we had been fine-tuning.
>
> As I walked to my Hornet late on the evening of 16 December, I saw the glow of Tomahawk launches from the surface ships to the south. It was 2306. Our first scheduled launch time was 2345, and I thought that we would go. Thirty-three combat-loaded aircraft and bomb carts were crowding the deck. I knew that we had passed the last hurdle in the execution timeline—and we went.

"By night three, I was on my third mission, but this one was different," continued Major Roberts. "I was leading it." The target, he continued,

> was in south central Iraq. It was also the longest range of all the strikes during the operation, 420 nautical miles one way, and required aerial refueling. Most of the strike leads had flown in their assigned target vicinity during *Operation Southern Watch* and

42 Major Robert Ross, USMC, "Desert Fox the Third Night," *Proceedings Magazine,"* April 1999, Vol., 125/4/1 154. www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/1999-04, accessed May 21, 2014. Major Roberts, a naval aviator and former artillery officer, was the operations officer for VMFA-312, a Marine F/A-18C squadron attached to CVW-3, deployed on board the USS *Enterprise* (CVN-65).

43 Brackets in italics were inserted to incorporate and highlight maneuver warfare tenets in use by the Marines in the VMFA-312 unit during *Operation Desert Fox*.

were familiar with the target area, inertial navigation system update points, targets, and key terrain features.

The day prior to execution (day two of Desert Fox) I gave my final concept of operations brief to the battle group and air wing commanders. With the plan approved, I set to work on finishing the details with my strike team. A month earlier, we had planned a westerly attack heading because the prevailing winds were light at altitude. The latest forecast winds at our altitude averaged 80–120 knots from the west. This changed our plan and reduced the fuel margin, but it was still manageable. The success of the aerial refueling plan was critical to mission success and it concerned me. [*Main Focus of Effort vs. Fog of War*]

Most of the missions into southern Iraq during Southern Watch were single cycle, autonomous day strikes that did not require aerial refueling; missions that required tanker support were in the daytime. Desert Fox, on the other hand, was conducted at night.

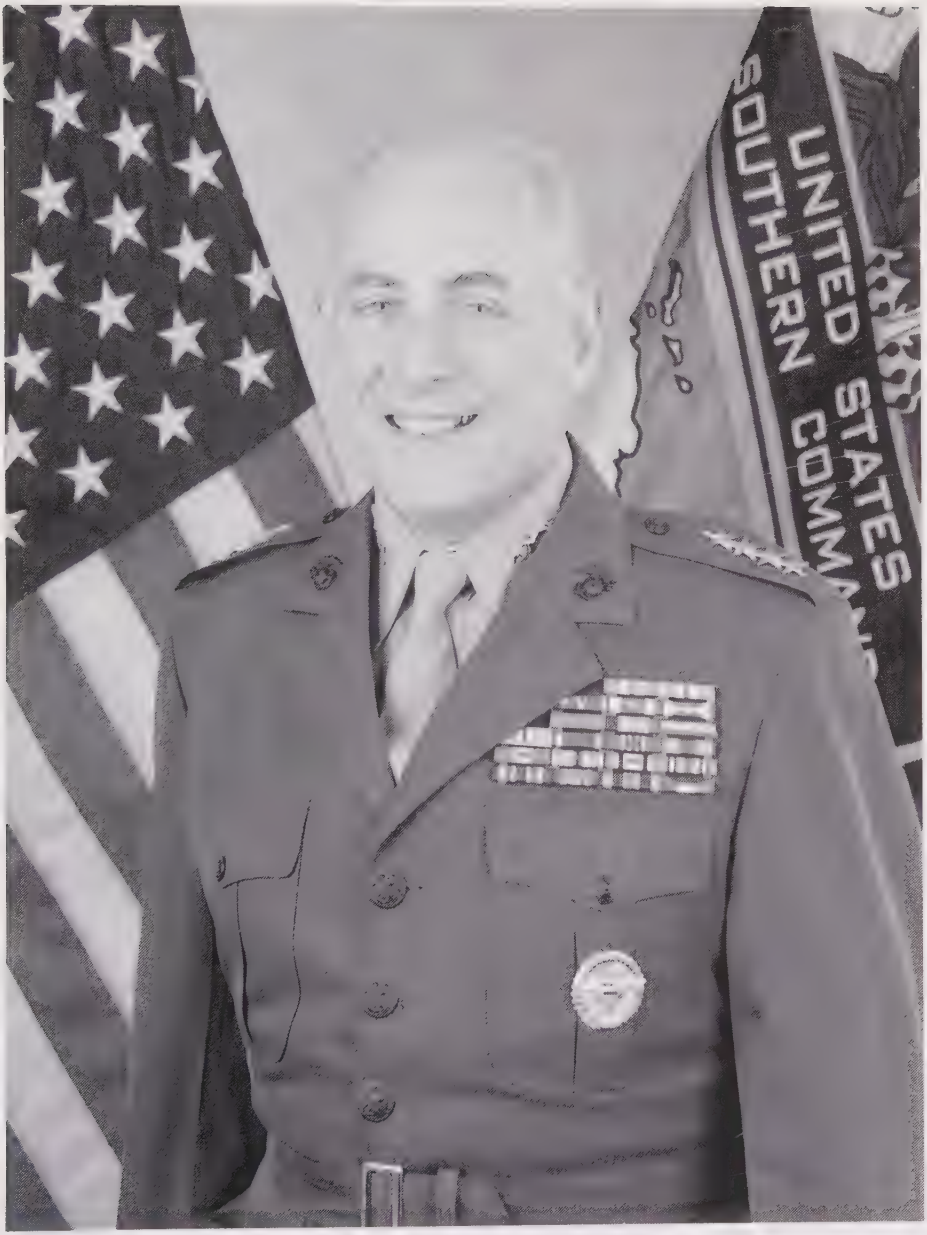
The first Desert Fox night strikes were all single cycle, designed that way to keep the element of surprise on our side [*a prime aspect of maneuver warfare*]. We hoped that by not alerting host bases of land-based tankers and combat search-and-rescue we could maintain the element of surprise. We took every precaution to maintain secrecy. For this reason, the first night of the campaign was to be a naval show, demonstrating one of the greatest capabilities of sea-based air power coupled with the surprise. [*Combined Arms Application*]

Without the assistance of Air Force tankers, we were limited to targets in southeastern Iraq. Organic aerial refueling was available to assist the recovery of aircraft low on fuel only. Beginning with night two, we had several long-range strikes planned, all of which required extensive tanking. U.S. Air Force and Royal Air Force aircraft were involved now, making the campaign a coalition effort. We refueled from Air Force KC-10s.

My strike brief was uneventful. I spent extra time explaining the tanker plan, and "what if's" and alternate plans thoroughly in the event a tanker did not show. This paid off, as we discovered on the pre-mission tanker rendezvous. The tankers were not in the briefed formation, nor did they have the briefed fuel off-load, because they were doing their best to cover all of our strikes with a limited number of aircraft. [*The fog of war and the unexpected in the battlespace*].

Decorated combat veteran Colonel Michael Wyly was a prime mover within the Marine Corps during its evolution toward maneuver-style warfare in the years after Vietnam. The fruits of his initiatives have been demonstrated on multiple battlefields, as well as in humanitarian efforts across the globe. *USMC*

Former General (and now Secretary of Defense) James Mattis USMC (ret.) speaking with members of the U.S. Strategic Command during a visit to Offutt Air Force Base in Nebraska, September 14, 2017. He commanded I MEF, U.S. Marine Forces Central Command, and 1st Marine Division during the Iraq War. *DoD*



General John Kelly, USMC (ret). Kelly served as commander of U.S. Southern Command, the Unified Combatant Command responsible for American military operations in Central America, South America, and the Caribbean. He had served as commanding general of the Multi-National Force West in Iraq (February 2008 to February 2009), and as the commander of Marine Forces Reserve and Marine Forces North in October 2009. Kelly served for a short time as Secretary of Homeland Security under President Donald Trump, and is currently serving as his White House Chief of Staff. *DoD*

General James Amos, USMC (ret.) was the first Marine aviator to serve as a Commandant of the Marine Corps (the 35th). He is pictured here speaking to Hawaii-based Marines and sailors during a visit to Marine Corps Base Hawaii, in 2012. General Amos commanded the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing in 2003-04 during the Iraq War. Marines can fight wars of attrition, but, explained Amos, "they are uniquely equipped and trained to do much more." *DoD*

Above: General James T. Conway, 34th Commandant of the Corps, conversing with General Larry Nicholson, commanding general of Marine Expeditionary Brigade–Afghanistan, at Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan on August 23, 2009. Conway led the I MEF in Iraq and credits Boyd's OODA Loop for much of the success the Marines enjoyed there in 2003-04. *DoD*

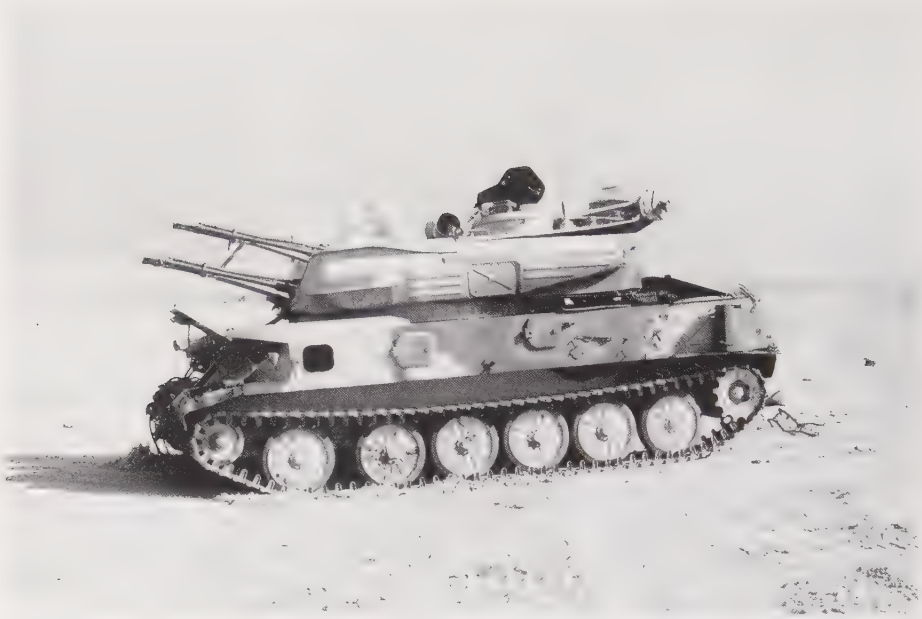
Below: 3/1 in the Jolan District. *Maj Rob Bodisch*

An M60A1 of Delta Company, 2nd Tank Battalion, fitted with reactive armor and an M9 dozer kit, rehearses breaching operations for *Operation Desert Storm* in late January 1991. *SSgt M. A. Masters, Defense Imagery*

Operation Provide Comfort was the effort to secure the Kurdish region of northern Iraq against Saddam Hussein's retaliation. The Marines deployed to the region were supported by air-portable LAVs. *PH3 J. R. Klein, Defense Imagery*

East meets West in this striking image of a heavily-loaded donkey cart passing a heavily loaded Marine Corps M1A1 tank in the streets of Baghdad, Iraq, on April 9, 2003. *Sgt P. L. Anstine II, Defense Imagery*

A tank-infantry patrol in the streets of Haditha, Iraq, on January 27, 2005. *GySgt K. W. Williams, Defense Imagery*



Low-altitude close air support is a fundamental part of Marine Corps combined arms effect tactics. Enemy weapons systems like this Soviet-supplied self-propelled ZSU-23-4 anti-aircraft gun were priority targets for ground forces in *Operation Desert Storm* and *Operation Iraqi Freedom*. *NA*

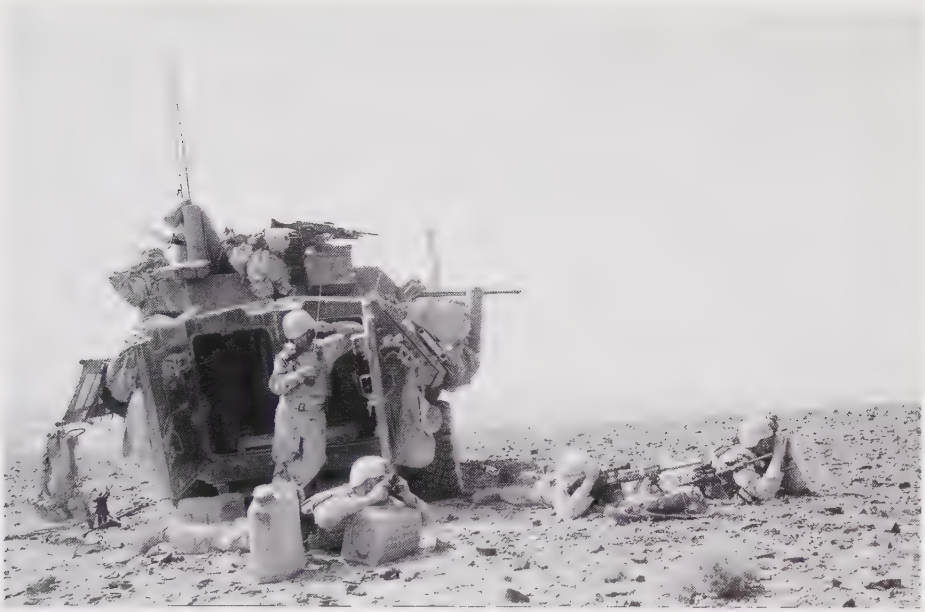
A tank supports 1st Battalion, 8th Marines, in the streets of Fallujah, Iraq on November 9, 2004. *LCpl J. A. Chaverri, Defense Imagery*

Dismounts from Delta Company, 3rd LAR Battalion, search an Iraqi farm near Balad on August 4, 2008. The dense vegetation of the farmlands in the river valleys contrasts sharply with the surrounding desert. *LCpl A. L. Hunt, Defense Imagery*

Apache AH-64 helicopter over Fallujah. *Dan McClinton*

An LAV-25 of 3rd LAR Battalion patrols near al-Rutbah, Iraq, on New Year's Day, January 2005. *LCpl R. A. Hilario, Defense Imagery*

Marine Tanks in attack positions, north of Fallujah, Iraq. *Lt. Jeffery Lee*



Scouts from Charlie Company, 3rd LAI, search for a Taliban mortar observer in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, March 16, 2011. *Sgt Jeremy Ross, Defense Imagery*

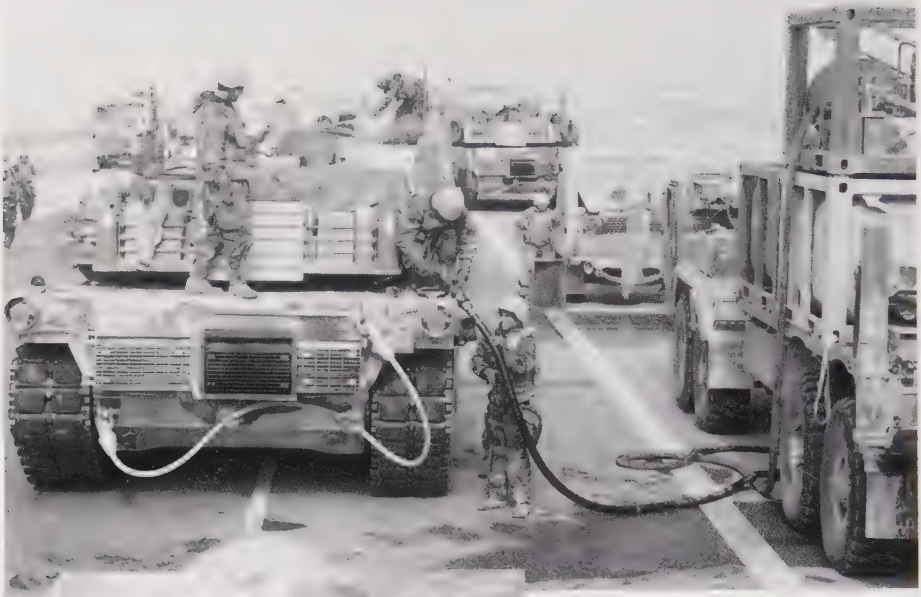
The CH-53E Super Stallion heavy-lift helicopter provides air mobility for artillery like this 155mm howitzer and light vehicles. In-flight refueling capability allows it to undertake missions far from supporting ships or land bases. *LCpl Clare Shaffer, USMC*

Sgt. Nick Popaditch watching oil wells burn in Kuwait, set ablaze by Saddam Hussein's retreating army in 1991's *Operation Desert Storm*. Popaditch, a tank commander, also fought in *Operation Iraqi Freedom* and *Operation Vigilant Resolve*. He was critically wounded in the latter fight in Fallujah, awarded the Silver Star, and medically retired from his beloved Corps. He is the author of *Once a Marine: An Iraq War Tank Commander's Inspirational Memoir of Combat, Courage, and Recovery* (2008). *Nick Popaditch*

Assault Amphibious Vehicles on the beach near Mogadishu, Somalia, December 1992. The basic design of the AAV dates to the latter days of the Vietnam War, and the bolt-on side armor was added to resist light anti-tank weapons like RPGs. *USMC*

The ultimate task of all components of the Marine air-ground team is to support the infantry as they close with and destroy the enemy. These Marines (Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, Sixth Marines) are in a firefight south of Baghdad during *Operation Iraqi Freedom*. *NA*

The FGM-148 Javelin "fire and forget" top-attack anti-tank missile is the latest of several anti-tank missile systems used by the Marine Corps, primarily a light infantry force, to counter heavy enemy armor. *NA*

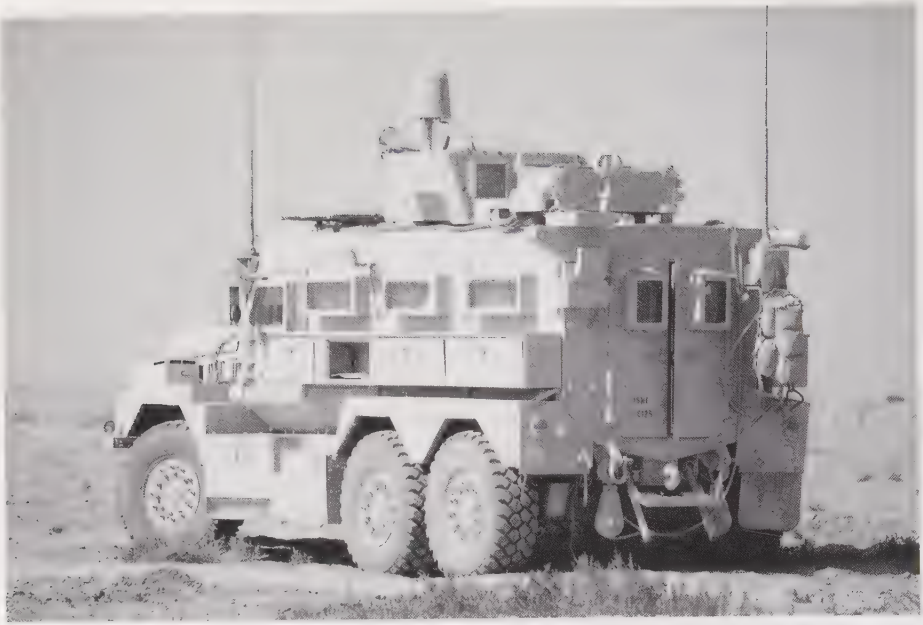


Above: To maintain the momentum of the attack, logistical support must be pushed as far forward as possible. These Logistics Vehicle System tanker trucks are refueling tanks of Charlie Company, 1st Tank Battalion just behind the front line south of Baghdad, Iraq, in April 2003. *NA*

Left: The 5.56mm Squad Assault Weapon (SAW) provides the Marine infantry squad with the firepower of a light machine gun, while simplifying logistics by using ammunition in common with the M16 rifle. *NA*

Major Douglas Alexander Zembiec (nicknamed "The Lion of Fallujah" for his gallant service during *Operation Vigilant Resolve*) was a Marine officer and member of the CIA's Special Activities Division's Ground Branch. He was killed by small arms fire during a raid in Baghdad on May 11, 2007, and posthumously awarded the Silver Star. *USMC*

Marines may be called upon to undertake diverse missions in any number of harsh environments. These members of Weapons Company, 3rd Battalion, Third Marines are providing security for a winter resupply convoy in the mountains of Afghanistan. *NA*



During the latter stages of both Iraq and Afghanistan, units increasingly utilized Mine-Resistant Armor-Protected heavy trucks (MRAPs) like this one in 1st Battalion, 5th Marines in Afghanistan, November 3, 2009. *LCpl James Purschwitz, Defense Imagery*

Marines of Delta Company, 3rd LAR Battalion, repair a disabled LAV-25 on the road in Anbar Province, Afghanistan, on April 17, 2009. *LCpl B. A. Kinney, Defense Imagery*

"The tankers," recorded Major Roberts, "were not in visual formation, and they were using separate frequencies." He locked his radar on what he perceived was his tanker, and explained,

> as I lined up on the drogue, something obviously was wrong. This tanker had a center-line drogue, while my assigned tanker—the one I was talking to on the radio—was supposed to have wing-mounted drogues. It turned out that I had the right radio frequency but the wrong tanker; mine was twenty nautical miles away on the opposite end of the tanker track. To make matters worse, my tanker had only enough gas to give each receiver 2,500 pounds of fuel —instead of the 4,000 pounds we had planned on.
>
> As luck would have it, 8 of the 14 aircraft made the same mistake I did. At this point, I was pretty busy trying to figure out who was on what tanker on what frequency. I could already see the "Rolex" coming [*a term used to cover the unexpected and delay the time on target in increments, allowing for unforeseen circumstances*]. After much consternation over the radio, I finally reassigned aircraft to the planned tankers, but this lengthened the time I had allotted for refueling. I used our two S-3 Vikings (sea-control aircraft, with a secondary mission of aerial refueling), which I had planned to use as hose multipliers, to top off my wingman and me (who had been short-changed on the initial off-load in an effort to get all the aircraft refueled more quickly).
>
> I completed the aerial refueling five minutes prior to the push time. I looked at the mass of circling aircraft through my night vision goggles thinking, "How the hell am I going to get this mess joined and pushed on time?" It was time for the Rolex word, and I broadcast "Rolex five" on the strike common frequency; all acknowledged. Three minutes into the Rolex, we were still not joined. I finally had the strike package roll out on the ingress heading. I thought it would be easier to sort the formation out if we were straight and level heading in the same direction.
>
> I had planned the ingress route to avoid probable Iraqi antiaircraft artillery (AAA) and surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) [*when to offer battle*]. The strong head winds complicated the suppression of enemy air defense (SEAD) package (one EA-6B and two FA-18s carrying two High Speed Anti-Radiation Missiles [HARMs]). I pushed the SEAD package three minutes ahead, planning to catch up with them as we turned the corner from west to east in the final attack from the initial point.

I had not updated my inertial navigation system (INS) at Fahlaka Island (off the coast of Kuwait) as planned because of the mess at the push/rendezvous point. We usually planned at least two and sometimes three update points along the route to correct for the inaccurate ship's inertial navigation system. We found this step was the most critical in successful target location. I hoped my INS would be accurate enough to at least find my second update point (a road intersection) with the FLIR. It took some searching, but I found it and was able to tighten up my INS. This was fortunate because my system was three-quarters of a mile off and would have made target location very difficult if not impossible. At the initial point all of the strikers checked their lasers and FLIRs and I was surprised to hear everyone check in with operational systems. We always planned and briefed detailed back-up buddy-laser plans to enable a wingman to guide the bombs of an aircraft with a malfunctioning laser or FLIR. [*Insure that rapid tempo was not slowed at the point of attacks if malfunctions occurred*].

The strike package was composed of four strike F/A-18s, each loaded with two GBU-16s—1,000-pound laser guided bombs—two F-14s, each with two GBU-10s—2,000-pound laser guided bombs, and two F-14s as fighter escorts. A pair of F/A-18s doubled as HARM shooters and escorts for the EA-6B. Major Roberts explained what happened next:

The target was a Republican Guard base [*disrupt the ability to command for the enemy, therefore shaping the battlespace*]. The aim-points were a headquarters building and three barracks. One of the barracks was long, similar in design to those on U.S. bases. All of the buildings were concrete two-story structures. The three small buildings were assigned one F/A-18 per building with the remaining Hornet and two F-14s on the long (about 100 meters) barracks.

With all of our inertial systems updated, I had confidence we would be able to find the target(s). At the initial point, we turned right 120 degrees to place the target on the nose. As we began our turn my wingman called over the strike common frequency: "SAM launch nine o'clock!" I immediately responded, "Those are the HARMs!" They were on the way to their target just as planned, searching for the SA-2 and SA-6 postulated to be in the target area. It felt good to see them arc over us and into the target area looking for Iraqi surface-to-air radar emissions to guide on, giving us a short window of protection [*protecting the ability to put strength against weakness*].

The base was a small complex in a large expanse of desert. We were hoping the roads on the base would still be hot enough to provide a thermal contrast, which could be

transformed by the FLIR into a green-and-white television picture in the cockpit. As we came nose on to the target, the road complex that I had burned into my memory over the last couple of days was visible on my cockpit display. I picked the road where I had predicted my aim point would be and waited for the FLIR picture to build (as the range to target decreases, the FLIR picture gets better). I positively identified my target, the headquarters building just to the east side of a road intersection. [*We always tried to limit collateral damage and this target was isolated, which lessened my concerns.*]

I made one last check of my weapon systems as my wingman found his aim-point. I talked myself through my air-to-ground checklist, "Air-to-ground master mode, GBU-16 selected, quantity two, fuse delay one, laser armed, master arm on, tapes on (if it's not on tape it didn't happen), sweeten the laser aim-point, finger on the pickle, everything is looking good." Precisely at the planned distance from the target, the aircraft rocked as the 1,000-pound bombs were ejected from the bomb racks two-thirds of a second apart.

"The next 30 seconds is always the longest," admitted Major Roberts:

As the bombs fall ballistically toward the target, all you can do is continue to refine the FLIR aim-point to ensure the laser will fire precisely where desired; things are intense in the cockpit. Looking outside just shows you what is being sent back at you. Ten seconds to go, all right! The laser starts its automatic firing sequence. The laser-guided bombs (LGBs) fall ballistically until the last ten seconds and then guide on the reflected laser energy to the target. Five seconds . . . three . . . I could see the bombs fly to the target on the FLIR . . . one second . . . Direct hit. "Shack!" I shouted over the radio. (That's one term we picked up from our Air Force friends.) My wingman achieved the same results.

As I pulled off target and looked over my shoulder, I saw the AAA I was oblivious to during my delivery while I was concentrating on my FLIR display. It was all bursting below our altitude just as on the previous two nights. Two more impacts, both Shacks.

The third section (two F-14s) approached the target area last, searching for their aim points. All of the targets were smoking holes and only half of the long barracks was still standing. Some quick work by the Tomcat crews flattened it. So far, everyone had hit and destroyed his assigned aim point; for the sixth and final bomber, there was nothing left but the alternate target, similar in size to the headquarters building I had

just pulverized. He expertly guided the two GBU-10s into the building and completely removed it from the desert floor. We always briefed an alternate target to limit collateral damage if the primary targets already were destroyed. [*Collateral Damage Deficits see Small Wars Manual.*]

Quick fuel checks off target confirmed that the detailed fuel planning had worked out so far. As planned, we climbed to altitude to maximize fuel efficiency (120 knots of wind at our back) and to avoid being targeted by the dreaded, unallocated SA-6. Some members of the flight had 800 pounds less fuel than planned, but this was manageable as long as the tankers arrived on schedule. Ten minutes away from tanker rendezvous I called the tankers to let them know we were inbound. The strike package cycled through the single KC-10 (two-hose) tanker remaining without incident. Two S-3s provide the much-needed post mission fuel as briefed. Everyone took only what he needed and pressed home for the ship. The landing was dark and scary as usual, but uneventful. After the debrief we went to the various ready rooms to review the FLIR videos. It was amazing to see the amount of destruction we caused that night. Morale was high. Electro-optical imagery taken the following day confirmed the destruction we witnessed on our FLIRs. Five aim points destroyed, one heavily damaged and unusable—and all this with just six bombers.

The four-day campaign resulted in an unprecedented number of assigned targets either damaged or destroyed. Navy TacAir alone chalked up 72% of assigned targets damaged or destroyed. This can be attributed to an environment extremely conducive to the use of FLIRs and LGBs and aircrew familiarity with the target areas and terrain [*prior Intel shapes the battlefield*]. The Tomahawks damaged or destroyed a very high percentage of their assigned targets. Most of their targets were deep within Iraq and heavily protected by SAMs and AAA. The Tomahawks appeared to be more effective and efficient at bombing large fixed targets than TacAir. Manned aviation was extremely effective at destroying hardened bunkers.

If naval aviation is going to capitalize on the success of Desert Fox, future employment of strike aircraft should focus on missions requiring surprise and flexibility. Manned aircraft are optimized for rapidly changing scenarios, and proper planning enables them to change their missions once airborne. As described, however, our strikes required detailed planning well in advance of execution. There was little flexibility because target assignments and times-on-target (TOT) were controlled centrally. During Desert Fox, Tomahawk planners worked in the space next to our strike planners, yet we were not able to integrate them into our plans, even though the

majority of targets assigned to aircraft were perfect Tomahawk targets. We were simply handed a target folder with a desired probability of destruction, a TOT, and the rest of the plan was up to us [*Mission orders*].

Fixed targets are vulnerable to Tomahawk and Conventional Air-Launched Cruise Missile attacks, and potential foes may counter our strength here with mobility. Shifting TacAir to mobile targets should counter this gambit. Tomahawks and TacAir are complementary; defending against both is a true dilemma.[44]

Operation Restore Hope (Somalia)

After the fall of President Siad Barre in 1991, civil war broke out in Somalia between supporters of General Mohamed Farah Aidid and supporters of President Ali Mahdi Mohamed. A massive drought and famine was also engulfing the poor country. The United Nations sought to provide humanitarian assistance to Somalia through United Nations *Operation in Somalia 1* (UNOSOM 1). Its objective was to provide a safe environment to enhance delivery of humanitarian assistance and help rebuild the social, political, and economic life of the Somali people. Because of the fighting between local warlords, the internal war became so dangerous that UNOSOM could not reach its goals. Aircraft carrying supplies were looted as soon as they landed. Troops sent into Somalia were shot at, planes carrying aid were shot down, and ships were attacked in Somali waters and prevented from docking. All the while, the desperate plight of the Somali people escalated with an estimated 50,000 killed, hundreds of thousands dying of starvation, and an estimated two million rendered homeless.[45]

President George H. W. Bush proposed sending U.S. troops into Somalia, and in December 1992, 25,000 Americans and 10,000 troops from other allied states were deployed to the country. The coalition's agenda was to secure trade

44 Ross, *Proceedings*, 154.

45 United Nations, Security Council, "Report Of The Secretary-General On The Situation In Somalia," General Distribution, S/1996/42, 19 January 1996, 1-10. Also see Walter Clark and Jeffrey Herbts, "Somalia and the Future of Humanitarian Intervention in the Future," *Foreign Affairs,"* March / April 1996. www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/ 51844/ walter-clarke-and-jeffrey-herbst/somalia-and-the-future-of-humanitarian-intervention, accessed May 21, 2014.

routes to Somalia to enable the safe delivery of relief supplies to the Somali people.

The Marine Corps went ashore in Somalia on December 9, 1992. The invasion had not been communicated to the relevant Somali state authorities, so the entry was considered forced. Forcible entry from the sea enabled the Marines to exploit the gaps in the enemy's defenses by involving naval and joint capabilities, surprise, projecting sustainable power into an AO, and keeping the entry safe for follow-on forces.[46]

The Marines quickly secured the Mogadishu International Airport and the American embassy. Once the airport was secure, relief supplies could be furnished as planned, with the MEU providing security for the relief convoys. Maneuver warfare requires evaluation of both the enemy and attacking military weakness with strength. By securing the airport and ports, two of the major hindrances to transporting supplies were eliminated. This would make it much more difficult for Somali fighters because U.S. troops could depend upon a good logistical chain. The Somali fighters also had to withdraw from Mogadishu, which had been the focal point of their operations. Once ashore, the I MEF maintained its presence there for some time to sustain the Joint Task Force as well as the U.S. Army until the arrangement for theater support was complete.

In Somalia, the Marine Corps *Warfighting* doctrinal philosophy and *Small Wars Manual* provided the standards for the deployment. The Marine in charge was Brig. General Anthony C. "Tony" Zinni, who had garnered experience within this area of expertise during *Operation Provide Comfort* in Iraq. Zinni was also one of General Gray's students, but he was not considered an "evolutionist" plank owner, per se.

The following exemplifies the Zinni infusion of Marine Corps DNA and the then-current doctrinal philosophy of maneuver warfare during the Somali deployment for the Marine Corps:

Small Wars Principles: The numerous planning considerations outlined in the *Small Wars Manual* still apply to today's complex operating environment. The *SWM* outlines the requirement as follows:

46 Col. Dennis P. Mroczkowski USMCR (ret.), "*Restoring Hope: In Somalia with the Unified Task Force, 1992-1993* (Washington, DC: History Division USMC, 2005). www.mcu.usmc.mil/historydivision/Pages/Publications/Publication%20PDFs/Restoring%20Hope.pdf, accessed, May 21, 2014.

1. Unity of Effort: The *SWM* describes unity of effort by stating that the actions of Marines need to coincide with the actions of State Department officials, non-government aid agencies, the local supported government, and the community in general. The *SWM* stresses the need for a singular commander with designated authority to avoid both contradictory actions among organizations and the transmission of conflicting messages to the local populace. The manual also indicates that unity with the State Department is crucial to maintaining the political objective [Clausewitz, *On War*].[47] In addition, the manual explains that the best way to remain united with the local government and populace is by developing and supporting a constabulary. Cooperating with the local government, army, or constabulary keeps U.S. forces in accordance with the intricacies of the resident culture(s), which greatly helps foster local support.[48]

2. Security: The *SWM* stresses that Marines should plan for their own security (force protection) and for the security of the local populace (force projection). The manual describes the need for a balance in security. Marines need to protect their operating bases, but not to such an extent that they isolate themselves from the locals. The *SWM* indicates the need for Marines to interact with the locals and become familiar with their culture and social system. By doing this, Marines will gain the locals' trust and valuable intelligence which will further support security.[49]

3. Restraint: The *SWM* indicates that minimal destruction and loss of life is necessary to be able to achieve a lasting peace: "Caution must be exercised, and instead of striving to generate the maximum power with forces available, the goal is to gain decisive results with the least application of force and consequent minimum loss of life."

The use of restraint will be perceived as a sign of mutual respect and cooperation. The *SWM* also notes that educating Marines will result in restraint.

47 FMFRP 12-15, *SWM*, 1-18, 33. See also, Mroczkowski, "Zinni's reference to Clausewitz, *On War*," 51.

48 FMFRP 12-15, *SWM*, 12-5, 5.

49 FMFRP 12-15, *SWM*, 12-5, 5, 6-67/68, 39-40.

4. Perseverance: The campaign examples used in the *SWM* indicate that the Marine Corps should not plan small wars as small tactical operations. Major Allen Ford, USMC, in his thesis *The Small Wars Manual* and the *Marine Corps Military Operations Other Than War*,[50] identifies five phases within the *SWM* that a small wars campaign may follow:

Phase 1: Initial demonstration or landing and action of vanguard;

Phase 2: The arrival of reinforcements and general military operations in the field;

Phase 3: Assumption of control of executive agencies, and cooperation with the legislative and judicial agencies;

Phase 4: Routine police functions and elections;

Phase 5: Withdrawal from the Theater of Operations.

The *SWM* phases above are still applicable to today's operating environment, and they indicate the need to consider a larger campaign mentality during planning.[51]

5. Legitimacy: The *SWM's* reference to legitimacy is related to the political objective of the operation. The manual emphasizes the importance for Marines to portray an image of legality, morality, and righteousness. If Marines abuse their authority or break local laws, they should receive adjudication quickly and appropriately. The actions of all organizations within in an area of operation should not give the perception of favoritism or alienate a certain group. Most importantly, the military actions taken should resolve the problem at hand. The above *SWM* planning considerations provide a model for planning contemporary expeditionary operations.

50 Major Allen Ford, USMC, Master's Thesis "*The Small Wars Manual and the Marine Corps Military Operations Other Than War,*" U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2003, 59-64. Http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/usmc/ford.pdf, accessed 22 May 2014.

51 General Tony Zinni (USMC, Ret.) and Tony Koltz, *The Battle for Peace: A Frontline Vision of America's Power and Purpose* (New York: Palgrave McMillian, 2006), 143-153.

General Zinni's "Twenty Lessons Learned from Somalia" (*Operation Restore Hope*) set the tone for this operation as well as the implantation of Marine Corps maneuver warfare doctrinal philosophy:

1. The earlier the involvement, the better the chance for success;

2. Start planning as early as possible, and include everyone in the planning process;

3. If possible, make a thorough assessment before deployment;

4. In the planning, do a thorough mission analysis. Determine the center of gravity, end state, commander's intent, and measures of effectiveness, exit strategy, cost-capturing procedures, and estimated duration;

5. Stay focused on the mission and; keep the mission focused. Line up military tasks with political objectives. Avoid mission creep; allow for mission shift;

6. Centralize planning and decentralize execution during the operation;

7. Coordinate everything with everybody. Set up the coordination mechanisms;

8. Know the culture and the issues;

9. Start restarting the key institutions early;

10. Don't lose the initiative/momentum;

11. Don't make enemies. If you do, don't treat them gently. Avoid mind-sets;

12. Seek unity of effort/command. Create the fewest possible seams;

13. Open a dialogue with everyone. Establish a forum for each individual/group involved;

14. Encourage innovation and nontraditional approaches;

15. Personalities are often more important than processes;

16. Be careful whom you empower;

17. Decide on the image you want to portray, and stay focused on it;

18. Centralize information management;

19. Seek compatibility in all coalition operations: political compatibility, cultural compatibility, and military interoperability are crucial to success;

20. Senior commanders and their staffs need the most education and training for nontraditional roles. The troops need awareness training and understanding."[52]

Operation Stabilize (East Timor)[53]

Since the late 1800s, the Indonesian island of Timor had had conflicting political goals that in the late 20th century required military intervention. Three political parties vied for the leadership of the country, and each held different views concerning how to attain independence and the direction of the country once independence was achieved. Because of political unrest, by 1999 tens of thousands of East Timorese had either been killed or their whereabouts were unknown. It was at this time Indonesian president B. J. Habibe gave in to international pressure and presented the East Timorese citizens with two choices: attain complete independence from Indonesia or just seek political autonomy. Seventy-eight percent of the East Timorese voted in favor of complete independence in spite of intimidation by Indonesian pro-annexation militia gangs. Extreme violence erupted after the elections and the government

52 Center for Naval Analysis, "Military Support to Complex Humanitarian Emergencies: From Practice to Policy Conference," *Proceedings* (Alexandria, VA: Center for Naval Analysis, 1995), 30. Also see Zinni, *Battle for Peace*, 143 153.

53 James F. Glynn USMC, *Operation Stabilize: U.S Joint Force Operations in East Timor*, (Master's Thesis, Univ. of Kansas, 2001), 50.

of Indonesia did not attempt to quell it. As a result, more than 250,000 refugees fled to West Timor.

Australia was approached with a request to take the leading role in a multinational force to deal with the crisis. (Three UN workers had already lost their lives at the hands of insurgents in West Timor and two had also been killed in East Timor.) This multinational force came to be known as International Forces East Timor (INTERFET). The objectives of INTERFET were to establish peace and security in East Timor, protect and render support for the UNAMET, which had already arrived in East Timor, and try to carry out humanitarian operations.[54]

As part of the force, the U.S. Marines moved into the country with the mission to provide humanitarian aid while at the same time warding off the threat of armed gangs. They were augmented by four U.S. Navy ships including the guided missile carrier USS *Bunker Hill*. The Marines began by transporting relief supplies to the inhabitants of the island in order to avoid any more killings of UN aid workers. The 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit was dispatched to provide them with security as they went about their duties. The Marines acted as a good role model for ensuring doctrinal and organizational flexibility in the regular workings of the Timor military troops. The Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) played a major role in the operation. The MAGTF is a task organized combined arms team that has been cultured to fit into every mission.[55]

Such success in task organization as displayed by the Marine Corps accrues from enhancing habitual relationships that foster maneuver warfare applications. Unit cohesion is a key element in this symbiotic relationship, and leads to familiarity and in-depth understanding of each aspect of the mission. It also leads to more effective support at the Joint Task Force level. According to the American and Australian commanders, the turning point of the Timor operation came with the arrival of the Marine Expeditionary Unit and Naval Amphibious Ready Groups (MEU/ARG) off the coast of Dili on October 5,

54 James F. Glynn USMC, *Operation Stabilize: U.S Joint Force Operations in East Timor,* (Master's Thesis, Univ. of Kansas, 2001), 50; John Pike, "Operation Stabilize East Timor Crisis," *Global Security, 2003.* www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/timor-orbat.htm, accessed, May 22, 2014.

55 Marine Corps, *Campaigning,* Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication, (MCDP 1-2, PCN 142-000008 00 20), 1 August 1997, 1-30. Also see: Marine Corps, *Operational Maneuver from the Sea,* Distribution 145 00000100, January 4, 1996, 1-28. These two manuals were the work of General Krulak 31st Commandant of the Marine Corps.

1999. Their presence led to the daily improvement of conditions in East Timor as they worked in alliance with the INTERFET troops.[56]

Major General Cosgrove, Australian Defense Forces, was adamant about deploying his forces to the East-West Timor border where the pro-Indonesian militia gangs staged sporadic attacks. The arrival of this MEU/ARG's imposing presence increased mission capability and helped foster the securing of the border quickly. This MEU/ARG had more firepower than all the militia gangs combined. Success followed, and the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit left the island. In its place came the 11th MEU Amphibious Ready Group on October 26, as well as the Marines Special Purpose MAGFT, which debarked from the USS *Juneau* in 2000. The flexibility with which the MEUs conducted themselves allowed them to participate in many missions both humanitarian and military in nature. By recycling MEU troops on a daily basis, the intervention never went beyond its force limit requirements. Apart from that, each of the MEUs provided the international force with more functional area skills.[57]

General Zinni set the tone for this operation, basing his decisions upon his long history of successful humanitarian and expeditionary warfare actions garnered during his 40-year career as a Marine. His "Twenty Lessons Learned" was also the template for East Timor. It set the tone for this operation as well as the implementation of Marine Corps maneuver warfare doctrine in general.[58]

* * *

As this chapter makes clear, maneuver warfare applications were in evidence on the battlefield and in the village square for the period of the 1990s to 2001 (including Bosnia, Somalia, and other Marine Corps actions). Of further importance, the Marine Corps was using its Small Wars DNA within the context of maneuver warfare philosophy. The evolutionary character of the Gray Commandancy was melding "lessons learned" with the proposition that "free thinking" and Boyd's "outside the box" ideas were compatible in the

56 Pike, "Operation Stabilize East Timor Crisis."

57 Glynn, Operation Stabilize, 55.

58 See Somalia *Operation Restore Hope*, described above on page 131; Center for Naval Analysis, "Military Support to Complex Humanitarian Emergencies: From Practice to Policy Conference," *Proceedings*. Also see Zinni, *Battle for Peace*, 143-153.

classroom as well as on the Marine Corps training fields. To this can be added General Krulak's "Three Block War" and his "Strategic Corporal" concepts that, in practical effect, further validated a unique Marine Corps Way of War.

Chapter 7

Operation Enduring Freedom—Afghanistan

In the aftermath of the attacks on September 11, 2001, the United States determined to bring an end to the ongoing threats of irregular or asymmetric warfare it had been facing since the late 1970s. The horrendous terror attacks on New York and Washington were the final straw, and formal military actions were commenced with Congressional approval. Western civilization's warfare and its prosecution, as the world had experienced for the last 2,500 years, would provide the calculus to solving this problem of both attritional and irregular warfare.

To a large extent the new enemy was an amorphous, transnational, non-state belligerent, in this case based in the tribal areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan. These enemies were under the leadership of al-Qaeda's Osama bin Laden and the Taliban's Mullah Omar. Bin Laden, a Saudi national, was a veteran of the Mujahedeen Jihad, which had sought to expel the Soviet Union from Afghanistan. He had previously based his operations out of Sudan. However, al-Qaeda had to relocate to Afghanistan when the United States applied heavy diplomatic pressure on Sudan to end its fostering of al-Qaeda's terrorism. Al-Qaeda was a group of Islamist extremists from different countries formed in the wake of Soviet-Afghan War. With these battle-hardened Mujahedeen, al-Qaeda unleashed an international low-tech form of terrorism, or asymmetrical warfare, on the Western world in general, and on the United States in particular.

America experienced the first Islamist attack on its own soil in 1993 when a group of jihadists unsuccessfully tried to blow up New York's World Trade Center. President Clinton dismissed the act as a civil crime rather than treat it as the terrorist act it clearly was, which made it an act of war. Five years later in August 1998, al-Qaeda attacked two American embassies in Africa with great loss of life. Clinton responded by ordering a massive but wholly ineffective cruise missile attack on an al-Qaeda installation in Afghanistan that did nothing to deter or defeat the enemy. In October 2000, suicide bombers struck the destroyer USS *Cole* while at anchor in Aden. The attack killed 17 sailors. George W. Bush was elected president two weeks later, and it was hoped his new administration would devise a solution to the growing Islamist threat.

On September 11, 2001, al-Qaeda terrorists carried out another attack on the American homeland. Two hijacked Boeing 767 jets were deliberately crashed into the World Trade Center towers, leading to the eventual collapse of the iconic business complex. More than 2,700 people perished in the collapsing inferno. Nearly 100 more people were killed in a simultaneous attack with another hijacked plane when the Islamic pilot flew it into the side of the Pentagon. That same morning still another terrorist-controlled airliner crashed in Pennsylvania. The plane had been heading for Washington before passengers attempted what amounted to a suicide mission of their own to prevent the terrorists from flying it into another designated high-value target. The plane crashed in a field, killing everyone aboard. No fewer than 3,000 civilians and some members of the military lost their lives in this act of war stemming from an al-Qaeda fatwa against the United States

As the implications of this well-coordinated large-scale jihadist attack wound their way through national and international fronts, President Bush called for a Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) on the 12th of September, just one day after the attack. It would soon be confirmed that the attack had indeed been orchestrated by al-Qaeda's Osama bin Laden based in Afghanistan. The United States resolved to deploy forces to Afghanistan to destroy the jihadists and their protectors, the Taliban. The campaign would be called *Operation Enduring Freedom*.[1]

1 115 STAT. 224 Public Law 107–40—Sept., 18, 2001—S.J. Res. 23 (H.J. Res. 64): *Congressional Record*, Vol. 147 (2001): Sept. 14, considered and passed Senate and House. *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*, Vol. 37 (2001): Sept. 18, Presidential statement. www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-107publ40/pdf/PLAW-107publ40.pdf, accessed May 23, 2014.

The operation was very delicate considering all the risks involved. The first point of action taken by the United States was to order the Taliban regime in Afghanistan to hand over Osama bin Laden. As expected, they were unwilling to comply with the demand. Consequently, President Bush ordered the launch of attacks, to officially start on October 7, 2001. Some days before this, Special Forces operatives deployed to Afghanistan's neighboring countries of Pakistan and Uzbekistan. This was done following the counsel of then-commander of Coalition Forces in Afghanistan General Tommy Franks. Subsequently, Black Hawks made their entrance into Afghan skies undetected to effect the placement of reconnaissance units charged with gathering intelligence and guiding air raids against key terrorist targets.

Also ready to step off in force were the 15th MEU (SOC) and the 26th MEU (SOC), prepositioned in the Arabian Sea aboard the USS *Peleliu*. These were later reinforced by the 13th MEU (SOC) from the USS *Bonhomme Richard* for the anticipated deployment against Taliban fighters.[2] The initial combat depended solely upon U.S. air power. This was a strategy employed to achieve two main effects. Foremost, it was designed to keep al-Qaeda and Taliban forces in, or to have them retreat into, caves or other observed shelters. Second, it was designed to wipe out as much of the Taliban forces as possible before the military carried out joint ground operations. On the 7th of October, F/A-18 Hornets from the carrier USS *Theodore Roosevelt* helped escort bombers from the Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps. This pre-structuring of the battlefield signaled the beginning of *Operation Enduring Freedom*.[3]

The Pashtun-based Taliban were not only a problem to the United States, but to other ethnic groups and tribes in Afghanistan. An anti-Taliban organization called the Northern Alliance had been resisting the Taliban for years. U.S. Special Operations units partnered with the Northern Alliance in a bid to exterminate their common adversary. The strategy was to develop liaisons with such anti-Taliban factions who would join the fight against the terrorists. The U.S. achieved a rapport with the most powerful of the Northern Alliance leaders in an effort that can be likened to the Civil Action Patrols devised to fight the Communists in Vietnam. Back then, the Marine Corps CAP

2 "Operation Enduring Freedom Update," *Marine Corps Gazette*, 2002, Vol. 86, 2. www.mca-marines.org/gazette/2002/02/operation-enduring-freedom-update, last accessed May 23, 2014.

3 Ibid.

units had trained and supported South Vietnamese villagers while also helping to protect the villages. Almost 50 years later this DNA strand of the Marine Corps had kicked into high gear once again.[4]

It was hoped to finish the campaign in Afghanistan before the Afghan winter season, which would make movement in much of that mountainous country exceedingly difficult. The employment of surrogate forces more familiar with the country's terrain was in itself a major blow to the Taliban. Having to contain the Northern Alliance and at the same time worry about attacks from the air posed both a military and political dilemma for the Taliban.[5] The Northern Alliance proved willing partners to the U.S.-led Coalition, in part because their own military leader, the legendary Ahmed Shah Massoud, had been assassinated by al-Qaeda just prior to 9/11. In the Taliban heartland in southern Afghanistan there was not yet organized resistance, though there were certain tribes or groups willing to join the fight to overthrow Taliban rule. The south would be the staging area for the U.S. Marines coming from their forward deployed ships in the Indian Ocean.

"The Marines first went in to Helmand [province]. . . . I don't recall us ever being in traditional warfare," explained General Mattis in an initial glimpse into the Corps' practice of maneuver warfare. He continued:

> The Marines were brought in by a heliborne assault. . . . Instead of attacking from the outside of Sangin in through the irrigated area of the river valley, they landed in the middle of town and worked outward which completely screwed up the enemy. . . . The Marines brought in 850 men in the first two hours of the assault. They completely cornered the Taliban/al Qaeda forces. . . . It was maneuver warfare. The enemy knew we were coming. They'd seen the Marines forming south of Sangin, an area named by Alexander the Great. . . . The squads [of Marines] manned and moving from inside Sangin had worked outwards forcing the enemy into their own IEDs as they retreated. The enemy never recovered from that fundamental tactical mistake. The military leadership of the enemy left much to be desired in handling this unexpected attack route of the Marines. . . . Now, the Taliban were good at one thing, dying.[6]

4 West, *The Village*, ix-xvii.

5 Conway interview with the author. Marine Air-Ground Task Force (with its own air support and logistics).

6 Mattis, telephone interview with the author.

The Marines' first priority was to destroy the terrorist training camps in southern Afghanistan, and at the same time provide humanitarian assistance to civilians while protecting critical infrastructure. Maneuver warfare presented itself in two ways: initiating surprise and creating confusion. The Taliban grossly underestimated the technology the Marines could bring to bear. Their realization that they did not have anything approaching equal technology was enough to throw them into panic. Panic seeds confusion and disorder, making enemy combatants easier to subdue.[7]

Another maneuver strategy the Marines utilized was to annihilate the heads of the terrorist organizations. The Taliban gave Osama bin Laden and the al-Qaeda network significant security in return for financial support. A very thin line separated the al-Qaeda organization and the Taliban forces. In some instances there was no recognizable line at all. Killing or capturing the key leadership cadre of either or both groups would slow or disrupt their operations to the point of stagnation.[8] This, in turn, would achieve the Marines' desired effect of winning with the least possible cost in lives and treasure. Boyd's philosophy of faster OODA cycling by the Marine Corps enhanced their prospects for victory.[9]

Over the next two weeks the Marines made a clean job of the Taliban's air defenses. Joint Direct Attack Munitions (JDAM's) were employed in bringing down what anti-aircraft weaponry the Taliban possessed. Our GPS-guided munitions struck with an unprecedented degree of accuracy. However, the aim of maneuver warfare is not just to destroy the enemy on the battlefield, but to break the enemy's will to fight. The intent of the Marines was to never give al-Qaeda a chance to rise again. Therefore, the initiation of ground warfare was essential for the complete elimination of whatever al Qaeda or Taliban pockets of resistance remained.[10]

A high tempo with ruthless abandon was the essence of another maneuver tactic employed by the Marine Corps in Helmand Province.[11] Another attribute of this combined arms approach of the air campaign was that the civilian

7 MCDP 1 (Krulak) 1997. See also, Chet Richards, *Certain to Win: The Strategy of John Boyd Applied to Business* (Richmond, 2004), 13-28.

8 *Small Wars Manual.*

9 See OODA Cycling Chart, 262.

10 FMFM 1, and, MCDP 1.

11 Ibid.

casualties were minimal. By eliminating indiscriminate bombings, the Marines sought to win over a significant portion of the Afghan population to their side. This was also done by providing food supplies and infrastructure development to Afghan communities. This decision eventually won over a large swath of civilian loyalty. This practice of employing maneuver warfare's "soft side" came from not only the lessons learned from the CAP program but also from the Marine Corps' DNA found in the Small Wars Manual; the Taliban's morale would be negatively affected when they realized their own people had turned against them.[12]

The three carrier groups employed in the air campaign included the USS *Enterprise* and *Carl Vinson* Strike Groups from the Arabian Sea, and the *Theodore Roosevelt* Strike Group from the Mediterranean. The USS *Kitty Hawk* and *John Stennis* Strike Groups were at hand when it came to providing combined air support as well. During the initial stages of the attack there was wide application of cruise missiles fired into Afghanistan. These seaborne attacks helped in launching surprise ground attacks on the unsuspecting Taliban targets by Marine special operators. Eighty-eight cruise missiles were launched in the first 10 days of the attack. While the Marines were better suited to utilize rapid maneuver warfare strikes that quickly finished off the adversary, the ground warfare in *Operation Enduring Freedom* took longer than expected. Though the Taliban was quickly dealt a crushing defeat, pacifying the country would take much longer. General Mattis referred to it as a marathon rather than a sprint.[13] *Operation Enduring Freedom* had earlier been known as *Operation Swift Freedom*. The realization that freedom would not be as swift as anticipated might have been the reason for the change in mission names.

A key decision combined the 15th MEU (SOC) and the 26th MEU (SOC) to form Task Force 58, which played a big role in the eventual downfall of the Taliban. Task Force 58 was made up of two infantry battalions: 1st and 3rd Battalions, 1st Marine Regiment, two helicopter squadrons (HMM-165 and HMM-365), and two logistic support groups that entailed MSSG 15 and MSSG 26. Together they numbered about 2,500 sailors and Marines. Additionally, there was an Australian Special Air Service Squadron and a U.S. Naval Construction Battalion (NMCB 133). The Task Force headquarters was on the

12 *Small Wars Manual*.

13 Mattis, telephone interview with the author.

USS *Peleliu*, with a forward Observation Post (OP) coupled with a jump Command Post (CP). The headquarters was made up of 32 personnel. This small number of people enabled the missions to be carried out with agility and precision. Unlike in Northern Afghanistan, where neighboring countries provided bases and overflight rights, the Marines in southern Afghanistan had no such official support. This meant they could not advance until they received permission to fly over Pakistan, and to some extent this affected the strategic tempo of Marine Corps maneuver against the Taliban.[14]

Unlike the armed forces of in most countries, the Marines view the sea not as a stumbling block to their operations but as beneficial maneuver space. They used it as a geographical advantage because the enemy would never be able to determine the direction from which an assault would hit them. This deficit threw the adversary onto the horns of a dilemma: defend the coast or move inland? This was maneuver warfare 101 in action. At the same time, it gave the Marine Corps the freedom to choose where, when, and how to attack.

Because entry into Afghanistan was opposed by the Taliban, the operation had to be carried out with violent force. Forcible entry strategy owes its foundation to maneuver warfare. The principles that were applied in operating this maritime maneuver included:

1. Complete focus on operational objectives;
2. Viewing the sea as a maneuver space;
3. Quick generation of tempo and momentum;
4. Being conversant with both parties' strengths and weaknesses;
5. Concentration on deception and intelligence;
6. Merging of all organic joint and combined assets in order to give or refuse battle.[15]

Another aspect of the application of maneuver warfare by the Marine Corps focused on the need to shape the battlefield and all operators within it. As noted earlier, the Marines had gained a meaningful amount of local support. A few Pashtun tribes held common views with the Corps toward the Taliban.

14 Col. Vincent Goulding, USMC (ret.), "Task Force 58: A Higher Level of Naval Operation," *Marine Corps Gazette,* Vol. 95, Issue 8 (August, 2011), www.mca-marines.org/gazette/2011/08/task-force-58-higher-level-naval-operation, accessed May 23, 2014.

15 Conway and Kelly, interviews with the author.

This inspired their attack against the Kandahar Taliban faction. On November 14, Kandahar was basically the spiritual base of the Taliban, but by November 15 the enemy was already beginning to withdraw from the city. Pashtun allies paved the way, assisted by Special Forces and CIA paramilitary personnel. Only then did the Marines launch a major offensive.

Charlie Company, Battalion Landing Team (BLT) 1/1 left the USS *Peleliu* to make an amphibious landing on Afghanistan soil. The long flight was sustained through nocturnal aerial refueling. This was risky, but aided in the

surprise nature of the Marines shaping the battle space. The flight was 450 miles from the *Peleliu* to Objective Rhino over Pakistani airspace.[16] Calculated risks in seeking soft exploitable gaps paid off.

Although "official" Pakistani approval did not exist, a de facto agreement had been reached between the Corps and the Pakistani Marine forces providing the necessary support for this operation. The Pakistani Marines were tasked with surrounding the airstrip and providing maximum security. However, the internal politics of Pakistan was a sensitive issue. The government could not publicly announce their alliance with the U.S. Marines and in fact denied such allegations when confronted by journalists. Prepositioning the necessary logistical tail required many trips, and eventual sea landings were carried out. The Marines took to a cycle of hiding their logistical support in the sand dunes during the day and bringing in ships with more supplies at night. Without the aid of the Pakistani government, the operation's success would have been hard to achieve. Pakistan eventually granted the Marines access to a small fishing village where supplies could be offloaded. The Amphibious Ready Group made use of more than 13 Landing Craft Air Cushioned (LCAC), as well as four Landing Craft Utility ships (LCU) to ferry troops and supplies during these amphibious landings. Once on shore, trucks carried the supplies to the airfield. Only two trucks could travel in a night. The number of active war fighters had to be kept to a minimum until *Operation Rhino* was set to step off.[17]

Task Force 58 chose the village of Shamsi as the Forward Arming and Refueling Point (FARP). It became an important refueling center for Marine aviation from the ships en route to Camp Rhino. Until then, the Taliban thought they had Pakistani backing. The Marine Corps thought this as well since maneuver warfare requires one to have full knowledge of the opponent's strengths and weaknesses. The Marine Corps cut right through what the Taliban saw as their core base by winning over the Pakistani government, which made the operation smoother than it would have been under the circumstances. The Taliban and al-Qaeda, meanwhile, went through their operations normally, believing that the lack of Pakistani support for the

16 Jay. M. Holterman, "The 15Th Marine Expeditionary Unit's Seizure of Camp Rhino," *Marine Corps Gazette,* Vol. 86, Issue 6, 2002. Www.mca-marines.org/gazette/2002/06/th-15th-marine-expeditionary-units-seizure-camp-rhino, accessed May 23, 2014.

17 Holterman, "The 15Th MEU Seizure of Camp Rhino."

Marines would substantially weaken any Marine attack. Thus deceived, the Taliban were lulled into a false sense of security and thus greatly surprised when they were eventually attacked.[18]

Deception is a major principle of maneuver warfare, and its integration with surprise yielded the desired results for the Marines. Eventually a number of CH-53Es made it ashore in the company of AH-1W Cobras and UH-1 Hueys. The helicopters from the 15th MEU (SOC) landed 200 Marines to establish the Forward Operating Base at an abandoned airfield 55 miles to the south of Kandahar. They secured the airstrip with no resistance. Once *Operation Rhino* became Camp Rhino, the first assault came shortly thereafter when a pair of Marine Cobras encountered three al-Qaeda/Taliban armored vehicles. The strike destroyed two of the armored vehicles and killed scores of Taliban fighters. In one week, 1,000 Marines were in the AOR at their new FOB at Camp Rhino.[19]

The Marines using maneuver warfare tactics were always on the alert, never ignoring even the most minor signals offered by their foe during an operation. Maneuver warfare works best with a team being able to pick out gaps in the enemy's deployment and exploit them to advantage. This was exemplified on December 6 when flashes were seen on the northern horizon. The Marines were later informed by a reconnaissance Navy P-3 that enemy vehicles were being loaded. This piece of information proved vital. BLT 1/1 assaulted the enemy with 81mm mortar fire. The enemy had planned a surprise attack against the Marines, but instead the roles were reversed. In order to ensure there was nothing left in the area, a Light Armored Vehicle (LAV) was deployed to confirm the results of the attack. It appeared as though the day would end with this assault, but that was not to be.[20]

Another P-3 Orion Maritime Patrol Aircraft spotted a convoy of six vehicles making their way toward a Marine roadblock on Route 1. This Marine post was being manned by units from Light Armored Reconnaissance Company (LAR), Combined Anti-Armor Team (CAAT), and Marine Force Reconnaissance platoon. The enemy vehicles began halting at the roadblock, but one sped toward the wire blocking the road and only stopped when trapped by it. By this time the Marines had opened fire on the vehicle and it burst into

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid.

flames. An enemy who tried to escape from the burning truck was cut down by a Marine sniper. The explosion that followed scattered the other occupants of the vehicle on the road. The P-3 observers worked closely with a Forward Air Controller (FAC) guiding fire for CAS aircraft. By the time the firing ended, 120 of the al-Qaeda militiamen had died and movement on Route 1 ended for the enemy.[21]

This incident demonstrated an excellent application of maneuver warfare. The units in Task Force 58 did not work on a designed schedule, but off a mission-type order to interdict the road. Knowing their commander's intent, that is exactly what they did. A side benefit of this action rid the terrorists of many of their ardent followers and possible future recruits.[22] Maneuver warfare requires an assessment of the current situation and the forming of an immediate judgment based upon that assessment. The rapid airstrike that followed threw the Taliban into massive confusion from which they could not recover. Ultimately, they suffered heavy casualties and all their vehicles were destroyed. This incident is an example of military success obtained through rapid deployment and good intelligence gathering.[23]

The airport in Kandahar city was captured by the LAR Company from the 15th MEU (SOC) in mid-December 2001 in an operation named Task Force Sledgehammer. At dawn, helicopters from the 15th and 26th MEUs carried reinforcements to the airport from the 6th Marines, India Company, 3rd Battalion. The surrounding area was explored for unexploded devices and booby traps. The Taliban/al-Qaeda army had been cunning enough to carpet the runways with mines and miscellaneous metal pieces. A few planes were lost to this tactic, though the Marines tried as hard as possible to avoid such accidents.[24]

The capturing of the airport cut off communication between the northern and southern Taliban, severely hampering their operations. It also meant al-Qaeda was cut off from its supplies and reinforcements. In this application of maneuver warfare the Marines took hold of a location critical to the Taliban—a soft spot in the enemy's position that created a gap that splintered the enemy's

21 Col. Nathen S. Lowrey, *From the Sea: U.S. Marines in the Global War on Terrorism* (Washington DC: USMC History Div., 2011), 89.

22 Mattis, telephone interview with the author.

23 Conway, interview with author.

24 Lowrey, *From the Sea*, 107.

forces and began the process of isolating their combatants. With no apparent threat to Kandahar Airport, it was easy for the Marines to penetrate deeper into southern Afghanistan.[25]

In January 2002, a platoon from Alpha Company joined the 3rd Battalion, 6th Marines BLT attached to the 26th MEU. Operations were concentrated within Kandahar province as before in an effort to bring the area under total control. There was no relaxation with the patrols, and reconnaissance efforts were still conducted to ensure the enemy had been subdued. Prisoners captured by the Marines were questioned by Marine Interrogator Translators, the 202nd Military Intelligence Battalion, the CIA, the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), the Criminal Investigative Division (CID), and MI-5 British Intelligence. These agencies wanted to learn as much as possible about the prisoners and their chain of command, training, weaponry, and any other useful information. General Mattis allowed full access to the prisoners on the grounds that any useful information gathered would be shared by all. He also ordered that he be immediately informed about any "alarm type" information concerning pending attacks and actionable intelligence.[26]

Meanwhile, a team of specialists under Lt. Commander Runkle was sent to support a team from the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) to scour the Karnak Farm, which served as an al-Qaeda training ground. The farm became one of several Sensitive Site Exploitation (SSE) missions that Task Force 58 had carried out alongside Task Force K-Bar. The team found a large number of valuable files and training manuals along with paperwork that would be essential sources of intelligence for the operation. The task force also carried out SSE missions in a place suspected to have ties with chemical and biological warfare research. A special Chemical Biological Inspection Site Team (CBIST) was dispatched to provide support for the Australian Task Force 64. These units, together with the Marine security elements, were deployed in the Dewaluk region to searched eight villages.

The elements did not find anything substantial during that particular mission. However, in the early days of January 2002, Task Force 58 and Task Force K-Bar were sent on a mission to clear a number of caves in the Zhawar Kili area. Contrary to all expectations, the mission took a dozen days instead of

25 MCDP 1.1.

26 Mattis, telephone Interview with author.

a few hours because the caves were jammed with intelligence, ammunition, and explosives.[27]

On January 19, 2002, the 26th MEU handed over responsibility of the airport to units of the 101st Airborne Division, Task Force Rakkasan. On February 5, General Mattis' team began exiting Afghanistan. The three months Task Force 58 spent ashore had been of great importance to the war effort. Maneuver-type actions of demonstrable importance conducted by this Task Force included:

— Sealing off the western escape routes that lay along the Highway 1;
— Securing the U.S Embassy in Kabul;
— Securing a special operations facility in Khowst;
— Capturing Kandahar International Airport;
— Putting up a short-time holding facility that served as detention grounds for enemy prisoners;
— Carrying out successful Sensitive Sites Exploitation missions (SSE);
— Slackening the Taliban's hold of Kandahar city and province;
— Forcing many Taliban fighters to withdraw from the city and surrounding regions.[28]

Return to Afghanistan

From approximately mid-2002 to 2005 Afghanistan enjoyed a period of relative peace as the shattered Taliban/al-Qaeda forces laid low after their surviving leaders fled across the border into Pakistan. While the United States took on a different opponent in Saddam Hussein's Iraq, the Islamist fighters in Afghanistan regrouped and the countryside once more became a battleground.

The Marines redeployed to Afghanistan when Taliban strength significantly increased and Helmand province and its constituent districts offered the Taliban a haven for their renewed operations. In March 2008, the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit was dispatched to Afghanistan to support the 2nd Battalion, 6th Marines who had already been redeployed there. Their mission was to conduct operations that would eliminate or at least neutralize

27 Lowrey, *From the Sea*, 42.

28 Ibid.; see also, MCDP 1; Mattis, telephone interview with the author.

the Taliban threat in volatile Helmand, beginning with patrols in the areas reoccupied by the Taliban. The Marines advanced into the southern part of the province, entering the Garmser (Garmsir) and Nawa districts sooner than the Taliban anticipated. The Marines spread out into the villages of the lush farming districts intending to stay put and establish a presence.

The Marines took a different strategic maneuver approach with this operation. Their first priority was to ensure there were no civilian casualties. In the other operations, they had come to pursue and eliminate the Taliban, but this was no longer the case. New rules of engagement (ROE) reflected the changes in their commander's intent. The Marines received strict orders that required them to withdraw from an engagement with the Taliban if civilian lives were at risk and reconnect at a later time. Even if Taliban fighters fired at them, the Marines were not to fire back unless the situation was ROE "compliant." The response was to be the same when they encountered roadside bombs. The Marines sought to win civilian confidence and assure them they would be safe in American hands. The intent (with maneuver in mind) was to erase the picture that had been painted in civilian minds that Americans were responsible for the violence and destruction. And so began General Mattis' Distributive Operations, an adaptation from the original CAP applications of the Vietnam War.[29]

In a predawn attack, the Marines moved on the town of Dahaneh, which had been under Taliban control for an extended period. The launch of this mission was aimed at securing the area for important upcoming elections. The Marines were flown into Dahaneh and dispatched behind enemy lines. The Taliban insurgents responded to the assault with heavy fire from mortars, small arms, and rocket-propelled grenades—the standard insurgent tools that had grown synonymous with these militia forces. The Marines returned fire and engaged with combined air support and helicopters flying overhead dropping flares to mark enemy forces.[30]

The purpose of this action at Dahaneh was to isolate the insurgents from the civilian population by driving the enemy into the mountains and forests. If successful, the civilians would be left to participate peacefully in the

29 Carter Malkasian, War Comes to Garmser: Thirty Years of Conflict on the Afghan Frontier (Oxford, 2009), 1-22; www.afghanscene.com, accessed May 23, 2014.

30 Alfred de Montesquiou, "Taliban-held town focus of latest assault," *Leatherneck Magazine*, August 12, 2009, www.leatherneck.com/forums/showthread.php?87762-Taliban-held-town-focus-of-latest-assault, accessed May 23, 2014.

Afghanistan presidential election, which the Taliban had sworn to do absolutely everything in their power to disrupt. The battle raged for an extended period. Seven to ten Taliban soldiers were killed during the assault. The battle was slowed by insurgents who resorted to firing rounds from rooftops, but this tactic was neutralized when the Marines called in precision airstrikes.

At the onset of the action, nearly 100 civilians fled the town. The evacuation left the attacking troops confident that any remaining Afghans in the town would be insurgents. Tremendous care was taken to avoid civilian casualties because, as noted earlier, capturing Dahaneh was also intended to win the hearts and minds of these civilians. The Taliban had levied heavy taxes at Dahaneh's checkpoints because the village was astride an important trade route in the region north of Helmand. These taxes, together with funds garnered from a thriving drug business, formed the major source of finances for the Taliban. In addition to winning hearts and minds, it was hoped the mission would reclaim the important market center from the Taliban so the Marines could hand it over to local civilians.[31]

Along with a sizable cache of weapons, the Marines also seized a large quantity of opium during this operation. The insurgents had considered Dahaneh home, so they had rejected their earlier strategy of shooting and running. In this battle, they stood their ground and fought back. Dahaneh was a Taliban center of gravity. By attacking and ejecting the Taliban forces from the town, the Marines further demystified the strength of the Taliban. The Marines deprived the Taliban in Dahaneh of their supply lines, meaning that in a short time they would stand out from the civilians, expose themselves to the Marines—and die.[32]

During the post-engagement timeframe, the first patrol mounted in the town after the retreat of the insurgents was conducted. A contingent of Afghan soldiers and female Marines (FET's) set out to find civilians who might have gone into hiding within Dahaneh when the attack began. The Marines had responded proportionally to the fighting so civilians in town would not be harmed; in fact, there was not a single civilian casualty during the entire

31 de Montesquiou, "Taliban-held town focus of latest assault."

32 Ibid.

assault. These actions (aspects of maneuver warfare) designed around a subdued yet intentional ROE achieved the pacification of Dahaneh.[33]

The Marines took over Sangin,[34] a district north of Helmand province, from the British in mid-October. Sangin was one of the most violent al-Qaeda/Taliban places in all of Afghanistan, and as a major Taliban stronghold their attacks reflected as much. The Taliban had not taken the presence of Marine and coalition troops in Sangin lightly, for this was where the insurgents obtained a major source of their funding. Copious amounts of opium and heroin were processed in the lush valley of Sangin. The lucrative drug business funded the Taliban's battles. It was also the last of such havens in Helmand province, for all the others had been disrupted by the Marines and coalition forces.[35]

Sangin was also a major choke point from which the area's drugs were funneled out for distribution. Weapons and fighters also made this their juncture for movements to other provinces. The 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment that took over Sangin intended to take a more aggressive approach than had been heretofore prosecuted. The British had exercised a more lenient approach, but had also lost almost one-third of their troops. Their withdrawal raised a lot of worries as to whether the Marines would be able to finish the task. The switch was announced as a British withdrawal made so the Brits could focus on central Helmand Province while the Marines took care of the north and south.

The first action undertaken by the Marines was to shut down a dozen of the 22 patrol bases the British had constructed throughout the Sangin district. This move was a clear indication the Corps had no interest in employing the British tactics of neighborhood policing. The original purpose of these bases was to improve the security situation in the districts. The British, however, ended up deploying most of their troops to the bases, leaving other parts of the area of responsibility in the hands of the Taliban. The British FOBs were closed in

33 Marines Storm Taliban Town in Afghanistan," Fox News, August 12, 2009. http://www.foxnews.com/story/2009/08/12/marines-storm-taliban-town-in-afghanistan, accessed May 23, 2014.

34 Herschel Smith, "US Marines More Aggressive than British in Sangin," *Los Angeles Times*, November 9, 2010, www.latimes.com/search/ dispatcher.front?Query=archives& target=all; see also, www.captainsjournal.com/2011/05/13/true-confessions-of-british-counterinsurgency, accessed May 23, 2014.

35 See OODA Cycling Chart, 262.

order to free maneuver forces, which would then pursue the enemy without the fear of their bases being attacked or captured.[36]

From the outset the Marines conducted many and much more aggressive patrols throughout the area. They responded to the Taliban with heavy return fire instead of retreating to their bases as the British had done. As the Marines soon discovered, the Taliban in Sangin were a different bread of insurgents. Instead of waiting to be attacked, they went out looking for the Marines. This change in enemy tactics convinced the Marines to employ small unit maneuver warfare as their modus operandi because their numbers were much too small to take on the Taliban in a major combat operation. The small units would take advantage of their numbers to involve the Taliban in maneuvers designed to entrap them. The Taliban never engaged in combat for prolonged periods with Marines. They knew doing so was an invitation for deadly airstrikes that inflicted unsustainable casualties. The militants eventually adopted a "shoot and scoot" strategy. They would attack, as often as not drop their weapons, and flee. Instead of seeking cover when ambushed, the Marines counterattacked fast and hard. Snipers took full advantage of enemy confusion to eliminate retreating insurgents one by one.[37]

The most effective weapon utilized by the Taliban was the Improvised Explosive Device, commonly known as an IED. The enemy hid these explosives in a wide variety of places within the district. The general Taliban tactic was to plant the IEDs and then open fire at the Marines. The fighting was a means to lure the more aggressive Marines into these minefield kill zones. The ability of the Marines to out-think (or cycle faster through the OODA process) lessened and, in some cases, eliminated Taliban threats. The Marines maneuvered to fix these Taliban units in place so other squads of Marines could attack from a direction they least expected.[38]

Operation Moshtarak (which means "Together" in the Dari language) was launched to deal with civilian needs as part of a strategy of counterinsurgency (COIN).[39] This operation took place in the Nad Ali district of the Marjah

36 Smith, "Marines More Aggressive in Sangin."

37 Robert Gates, *Duty: Memoirs of a Secretary at War* (New York: Knoff, 2014), 495. See also, Conway, interview with the author regarding Marine Corps snipers.

38 General Kelly, interview with the author.

39 Senate Committee, Armed Services, Briefing *On Operation Moshtarak in Helmand Province, Afghanistan,* 111 Cong.2nd Sess. 2010, S. Doc. 6.

region, which had been under insurgent control for many years. This region was infamous for its profitable narcotics business. Civilians and senior government officials—in addition to the Taliban—had stakes large and small in the opium trade. This operation had not even a hint of surprise in it because the coalition forces made the people's safety and reduction of collateral damage their first priority. Leaflets air-dropped to the civilians informed them of the upcoming offensive and warned against hosting insurgents. Local elders convened meetings with coalition forces so make sure they would be updated on their plans and informed on what to do once the offensive started. Female Marines also went from one compound to another to try and get Afghan women to share information about their needs and garner additional intelligence about the Taliban.[40]

Operation Moshtarak saw the integration of a large Afghan force within the coalition units. In fact, to all appearances the Afghan army led the operation. This integration was meant to do away with reservations the local people had about NATO forces, i.e., viewing them as invaders. The coalition defeated the Taliban during this operation and left a small number of troops to guard the area. The moment the Taliban noticed coalition forces had mostly left, they returned to reoccupy the same areas and spread propaganda that they had defeated the "foreigners." This was first evidenced during *Operation Anaconda* at the start of the war and was now a lesson learned. Going forward for the Marine Corps, the tactic of clear, hold, and build was brought into play.[41]

The Marines did not want a repeat of Taliban resettlement once the clearance operations were over and so sought to merge military missions with socio-political operations in the Marjah area. Order was not supposed to be temporary as long as the Afghan military was in place. The Marines wanted to restore order and governance for the long term whether local allied forces were present or not. It was determined that Afghan forces would be inserted so the withdrawal of coalition forces would not create an administrative or military vacuum. The Marines also aimed at making the civilians their friends so they

40 Alexander Jackson, ICOS, "*Operation Moshtarak*: Lessons Learned," *Small Wars Journal* (2010), 27.; www. smallwarsjournal.com/documents/moshtarak1.pdf.

41 J. R. *Wilson*, "MEU (SOC) in OEF-A Special Operations Forces and Operation Enduring Freedom," *Defense Media Network*, (2011): www.defensemedianetwork.com/stories/operation-enduring-freedom-the-first-49-days-8/, accessed May 24, 2014; Jackson, "Operation Moshtarak," 1- 29; Jackson, "*Operation Moshtarak*," 1- 29.

would give them information about the Taliban in their midst, and where they had planted their deadly IEDs.[42]

The coalition offensive began with numerous British and American airstrikes. This went on for some time before the ground troops engaged. The Moshtarak offensive, which brought together more than 15,000 NATO troops fighting alongside a large number of Afghans, is a prime example of Boyd's OODA Loop process.[43] This was the largest military assault ever launched by NATO on Afghanistan soil and the first experiment of the strategy NATO had adopted in which success was not to be determined by the number of Taliban casualties (a typical attritionist mindset). Still, NATO officials believed there was a strong likelihood the operation would inflict the highest insurgent casualties yet witnessed in Afghanistan. In every way, this operation was meant to break the Taliban's back.[44]

The ground combat was preceded by RAF Tornado attacks over central Helmand Valley, which was where heavy combat was expected to take place. The region was scanned with target pods from helicopters to obtain intelligence and seek out anything pointing to Taliban locations or activity. This intelligence was sent to mission headquarters at the Kandahar airfield, where analysts sifted through it. Both U.S. and British sophisticated aircraft spy planes integrated into the order of battle jammed and disrupted Taliban communications. The first Taliban casualties were scored by unmanned Predator aircraft and Marine AH-64 Apache attack helicopters. The eleven dead insurgents had been busy planting roadside IEDs or deploying anti-aircraft guns when the attacks from above killed them.[45]

The initial attacks began immediately following the airstrikes. The Marines captured a number of canal crossings south of Nad Ali, one of the most densely populated regions in the Helmand Valley. The first Marine Chinooks landed at 0225. Infrared flares dotted the night sky, visible to the RAF pilots provided with night-vision equipment given to them by Marine Corps' Harrier

42 *Small Wars Manual.*

43 See OODA Cycling Chart, 262.

44 Sean Rayment, Patrick Sawer and Ben Farmer, "Afghanistan: First Stage of *Operation Moshtarak* Declared a Success," *The Telegraph* (2010), www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/7230940/Afghanistan-first-stage-of-operation, accessed May 24, 2014.

45 Jackson, "Operation Moshtarak," 1- 29.

AV-8B jet pilots. At 0400, the operation entered a critical phase when Marine helicopters filled with coalition and Afghan soldiers landed in the Taliban-dominated areas of Showal and Chah-e-Anjir. As soon as the helicopters landed, soldiers and Marines scrambled out to their positions. The "break-in" was underway. As the British forces went about capturing their designated areas, a 1,000-man force consisting of Marines and Afghan National Army (ANA) troops was dispatched to Marjah.[46]

The Taliban were expected to stand and fight in Marjah (as they had done in Dahaneh) instead of retreating after the initial assault. Everyone realized casualties could be high—on both sides. In the next 90 minutes, more Marines arrived in CH-53 Super Stallion transport helicopters. Daylight saw additional troops pouring into the area by land transport. Makeshift mobile bridges helped them cross rivulets and irrigation canals. Meanwhile, heavily armored MRAP trucks were busy plowing away mines to clear a safe path through which coalition troops could enter the city. As it turned out, the Marines secured many of their objectives quickly, encountering little resistance, and, in some cases, none at all.[47]

The operation had taken about two months to plan, followed by rigorous shaping operations to ensure the strikes would be carried out as fast as possible once the attack was launched. Each of the Afghan soldiers or Marines kept in mind the operation was not aimed at annihilating the Taliban, but securing the province for the local population—a pacification technique in line with the Small Wars Manual.[48] The most encouraging aspect of the operation was that some of the captured Taliban had an epiphany, showing signs of wanting to reconcile with local community members instead of remaining with the bloody insurgency.[49]

During the latter part of the operation, Marines took another tactic of counter-insurgency (COIN) in Helmand, borrowing heavily from Combined Action Platoons (CAP) in Vietnam. The Marines embarked on a long-term mission, living next to the Afghan fighters. The major tenets behind this

46 Rayment, et. al.," Operation Moshtarak."

47 Conway and Kelly, personal interviews with the author.

48 *Small Wars Manual*.

49 Senate Committee, Armed Services, "Operation Moshtarak." Also see Rob Johnson, *The Afghan Way of War: How and Why They Fight* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 267-268, 287.

stratagem, something General Mattis strongly encouraged, were to live and interact with the Afghan populace, form a liaison with the local forces, and thereby establish a rift between the local populace and the insurgents with the help of the local troops.[50] General Mattis maintained that if these small cohesive contingents that had undergone vast training lived with the people, victory could be assured. He linked this to his experiences in Iraq, where the Marines realized al-Qaeda had been brought to its knees when the people of al-Anbar province withdrew their support.[51]

The fact that Marines established a rapport with the local population, however, did not immunize them from ambushes. The insurgent strikes continued, though the threat had substantially diminished. Widespread corruption, however, often prompted local forces to shift their loyalty away from the Marines. This threat required the Marines maintain high levels of alertness.[52]

And so it came to pass that the Marines spent little time in their forward operating bases (FOBs) and much more of it interacting with members of the community. Civilian trust had to be earned, and this was not going to be possible if the Marines remained within the FOBs. In order to unite with the community, the Marines lived without air-conditioning systems, television, internet, or food served at the dining facilities. These Marines dined on the same fare as the locals and experienced the lack of amenities just as the locals did. The Afghans would ultimately develop a closer bond with their new neighbors and come to recognize that the real trouble lay with the Taliban and not the U.S. Marines.[53]

50 Combined Action Platoons of Vietnam have been reintroduced in Afghanistan under the guidance of Generals Conway and Mattis and have been renamed "Distributed Operations." This is a recent development being tried as a COIN initiative. For the most part it was an endeavor of the Combat Development Group and the Warfighting Lab at MCHQ Quantico. It can be considered similar to a combination of the Marine Corps Raider Battalions of WWII mixed with the Marine Corps CAP of the Vietnam War. Add in the lessons learned from *Small War Manual*, FMFM-1, MCDP-1 and "The Three Block War" concept with smaller numbers, reducing the BLT to the CLT (Company Landing Team). See Conclusions for further discussion.

51 Conway and Mattis, interviews with the author.

52 Combined Action Program / "Distributed Operations" was under the guidance of Generals Conway and Mattis. For the most part this is still a USMC "COIN" program.

53 Mattis, Conway, and Kelly, interviews with the author.

The Marines also mounted up to three patrols a day in the regions in which they lived. The frequency of these patrols outdid that of all other forces deployed in the area. These patrols insured maximum security and further enhanced the Afghans' belief the Marines were truly concerned with their security.

One example of the successful interaction of the Marines with the populace occurred in Garmser. When the 24th MEU arrived there in 2008, the area was wracked with frequent insurgent assaults in their bloody bid to capture it. The British there, backed by the surge of the 24th MEU, finally achieved a semblance of stability and put the district under the jurisdiction of the Coalition forces. The British handed over the responsibility of the district to the 2nd Battalion, 8th Marines in May 2009. There was not much fighting going on in Garmser when the battalion, also known as "America's Battalion," arrived. There was considerable insurgent activity in the surrounding districts, but Garmser was a different story because most of the activity was neutralized by the Marines and Afghan national forces. This mission was far from over for the Marines, however, for they intended to pass the baton for all security operations over to the Afghan troops—something that would take more time to do successfully.[54]

"America's Battalion" reached Afghanistan while military operations were entering a critical phase of the campaign. Previous battalions had focused on clearing Garmser and bringing stability to the area. "America's Battalion" concerned itself with the building and shaping of the district's future. The battalion succeeded in handing over 39 of its positions to Afghan troops, apart from redeploying $100,000,000 worth of gear to the ANA.

It was obvious the future of the district leaned heavily on the presence of an Afghan-led security force, but initially the Afghans were hardly equipped for such a mission. Afghan forces formed good backing for Marine patrols, but their manpower was barely sufficient to enable them to hold positions without partnering with the Marines.

The ANA deployed a single battalion, known indigenously as a "Kandak," to hold the entire district. Their coverage was extremely thin and barely relevant. The Afghan National Police Force, on the other hand, consisted of about 300 men, but the force was rife with corruption, poor skills, and the

54 Reece Lodder, Cpl. USMC, "Future of Garmsir in Afghan Hands," *Marines Magazine*, (May 15, 2012), http://marinesmagazine.dodlive.mil/2012/05/15/future-of-garmsir-in-afghan-hands, accessed May 24, 2014.

presence of insurgents hidden within the ranks. The Marines recognized the Afghan Police as Garmser's best bet for security and put in place a 25-man Police Mentoring Team and 210 ground combat Marines from Kilo Company, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines. They jointly identified the causes of corruption in the police force and eliminated it.[55]

As this was going on, the Marines also increased the magnitude of the partnered missions and operations. Two Marine Corps-directed police academies increased the number of Afghan Local Police from 120 to 369 patrolmen. (The number of the Afghan Police eventually rose to 600.) A second ANA battalion, the 6th Kandak, 1st Brigade, 215th Corps, was deployed to Garmser district from Marjah district. It started operating in the south of Garmser, backing the Afghan 2/1/215 unit that had been deployed to the north of the same district.[56]

The now fairly strong Afghan National Army spread through the entire district and carried out operations under the watchful eye of their Marine mentors. With time, they segued into more independent operations. This revamped their confidence and they began taking the lead with little Marine supervision. As the Afghan forces grew larger, Afghan citizens experienced a positive impact on their everyday life and increased local security.

Afghan confidence in the capabilities of their forces was further displayed when, following several tips, 32 IEDs were located and destroyed while 10 caches of weapons and other insurgent paraphernalia were recovered. The locals were so impressed by Marine efforts to get closer to them that they had tipped off the Marines about insurgent acts of violence, which included destroying footbridges in their village, occupying their houses without consent, deploying IEDs in their fields, and stealing their personal property and food.[57]

Colonel Peter Petronzio, the commanding officer of the 24th MEU, observed and concluded the Taliban lacked the means to fight their own war. They stole from, intimidated, and killed Afghan civilians while maintaining they were there to help them. Since the Marines' stay in Garmser, Afghan citizens had showered them with gifts of gratitude and information. They also presented local sick and injured to the Marines for medical care. These actions

55 Lodder, "Future of Garmsir in Afghan Hands."

56 Ibid.

57 CAP / DO and *Small War Manual* guidance.

pointed to increased trust of the Marines and support for their presence in the area. The Marines held a lot of conversations with the Afghan citizens in an effort to know what they needed most and what troubled them the most. The Afghans readily blamed their problems on the Taliban—a clear shift in perspective. Security was their first priority and they asked the Marines to provide them with this primary need.[58] This result was reminiscent of the positive results the Marine Corps' CAP program had achieved in Vietnam.

In a move to give their government more credence, the people of Garmser participated in the district community council elections. The elections were overseen by the Afghans and no incidents of record were noted. The Taliban government had made little sense to the people of Garmser before these elections. Most areas lacked representation. They had a serious water deficiency and a poor economy. The lack of education hampered their future, and the poor state of medical services only added to their list of burdens. The government now offered all these services to the people. With security and coherent administration, Garmser's economy has been on an upward trend for years. The economy was previously dependent upon opium and subsistence farming. With security assured, most of the Afghans went back to business centers like the Safar Bazaar, where they conducted transactions in safety. Businesses prospered. The number of shops also rose from 200 to 400 in a matter of a few months.[59]

Under the Taliban, most of the schools had been closed and girls were not allowed to be educated. The Marines' Female Engagement Teams (FETs)[60] did a great deal to create awareness of the rights of women in the district. Although Islamic law treats women as second class citizens or worse, the extreme Taliban measures, such as refusing to educate women, were done away with. This influenced the future decisions of the village regarding national governance. The Afghans realized the implications of these positive advances.

At the time, Garmser was a paragon of freedom in Afghanistan. Twelve schools were built and opened to the community in just seven months. People shopped for their needs openly and without fear of intimidation or being killed.

58 Malkasian, "War Comes to Garmser."

59 Lodder, "Future of Garmser in Afghan Hands."

60 "Female Engagement Teams" (FET), Regional Southwest Press Room (2012), http://regionalcommandsouthwest.wordpress.com/about/female-engagement-team-usmc/, accessed May 23, 2014.

District security forces were on call whenever the need for security arose. The Marines still stayed on for follow-up activities, but the bulk of security operations rested on the shoulders of the Afghan forces. Garmser was a shining success story of the Marine Corps' approach to counterinsurgency.[61]

The Marine/Afghan operation exhibited the following maneuver warfare philosophy aspects of a Marine Corps Way of War:

1. Commanders intent;
2. Mission type orders;
3. Reconnaissance pulls and soft gap exploitation;
4. The shaping of the battlespace prior to and during the operation (*Schwerpunkt*).

For the most part, this has been how the tenets of the *Small Wars* (Gray) and *Warfighting* (Krulak) philosophy have been successfully executed by the Corps in its actions, missions, and operations conducted in Afghanistan during *Operation Enduring Freedom*.

"A few of us that have done pretty well . . . that are maneuverists," explained General John Kelly in a recent interview. He continued:

> The point of this is the Marine Corps from a very early age, certainly since Gray, had been taught to be problem solvers and not to be limited by or confined by doctrine, if you will. Every Marine I know is a problem solver. And the Marines I know, which are a lot, don't fall back on "this is the [only] way you do it." Actually the Marine mentality—the way we think about war, I believe, is light infantry. That's the way we think about war. We may ride to the war in V-22's and helicopters and we may call air strikes by Harriers, but our mentality is light infantry in all of that and that has meant throughout Marine Corps history.
>
> We can fight and fight very well without our vehicles. So the light infantry mentality—John English's book on infantry is just superb in the way it lays this out. But if you have the light infantry mentality, even if you're in tanks and . . . armored vehicles, you're still thinking light infantry . . . back to the [rear door] thing. Avoid the surfaces, locate the gaps. Get in behind them.

61 Lodder, "Future of Garmsir."

"I used to say to the lieutenants, look, if you're standing at a bar and someone brushes by and touches your fanny, what do you do?" Continued General Kelly,

> Well, you're going to look. It could be a beautiful girl who's kind of coming onto you. It could be a handsome guy who's coming on to you. Or it could be just an accidental brush-by. But you're going to turn and look. That's what light infantry tactics is. Get in their rear and make their front lines irrelevant. . . .
>
> Jim Mattis and myself and some others, Joe Dunford and others, managed to actually have the opportunity to do it [practice maneuver warfare operationally]. It minimized the casualties on both sides which is always important I think even for the enemy. And at the end of the day we showed the world that what Al Gray forced us into was a good thing . . . even the PFC's, they've never been to the schools and everything, but when we went from heavy conventional warfare in the attack and then immediately dropped the helmets and flak jackets and started helping people rebuild the countryside and then as it turned violent it rolled right into counterinsurgency tactics. You look at what we did in terms of civilian casualties where we lived in Afghanistan. . . . Minimal civilian casualties. . . . You look at the other side, heavy civilian casualties because even in COIN, they never got away from the big punch, the big crushing use of firepower. They're attritionists.
>
> Jim Mattis and myself, we said we don't want to know how many of them we're killing. We want to know how many of them are waving to us as we drive by. That's what's important to us. That's why Mattis and Kelly never flew in helicopters. We'd drive down the roads and you can tell how the people are reacting to you and over time—it took three years—it took two of my tours over a six-year period—but if they were looking down when you drove by, or if they were waving at you when you drove by, you knew you had them when they started waving. So we rarely flew. Very seldom! . . . I remember reading about the criticism of the Vietnam generals—they always flew so they never knew what the guys were putting up with on the ground. They flew over the battlefield but they didn't know the battlefield.[62]

The Marine Corps Way of War, especially in Afghanistan, put into practice a Marine Corps–centric evolution directed from its primary resource, its DNA,

62 Kelly, interview with the author.

and further guidance from the military history archives of other successful Marine Corps warriors. The only caveat is the advice of Col. John Boyd, who observed that this was just the starting point in this evolution of the future of the Marine Corps.[63]

63 Please refer to the Introduction and the After-Action Report (AAR) of *Operation Apache Snow II* by Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 9th Marines, at Bari Gul Bazaar in Nad Ali District, Helmand Province on December 4, 2013, where a force of 96 Marines, sailors, and Afghan personnel engaged in textbook excellent example of maneuver warfare tactics.

Chapter 8

Operation Iraqi Freedom

Throughout the 1990s, and more so after 9/11, the United States viewed Saddam Hussein's Iraq as a nation that fostered both internal terrorism and terrorism abroad. Saddam had violated the United Nations' sanctioned directive to remove all of his supposed Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs). The issue of WMDs is still hotly debated, but WMD formed only one of the many reasons for invading Iraq. For the purposes of this study, it holds no significance on the operational art of maneuver warfare as practiced by the Marine Corps.

On March 17, 2003, President George W. Bush gave Saddam Hussein a 48-hour ultimatum for he and his sons to abdicate control of Iraq. The failure to do so would result in a military conflict at a date to be determined. Saddam paid no heed to this warning and the war began 20 minutes after President Bush's ultimatum expired.[1]

In accordance with General Tommy Frank's ground combat plan, the Army's V Corps would cross the Iraq-Kuwait border and attack Baghdad from the desert west of the Euphrates River. The Marine Corps would

1 Anthony DePalma, "A Nation at War: An Overview: Bombarding Baghdad, Deaths In Battle, And Rising," *New York Times on the Web,* March 21, 2003, www.nytimes.com/2003/03/22/world/nation-war-overview-march-21-2003-bombarding-baghdad-deaths-battle-rising.html, accessed 27 May 2014.

simultaneously to attack east of the Euphrates through a largely populated area. General James Mattis' message to the Marines' 1st Division set the tone for what was to be expected from the coming Marine Corps Way of War:

1st MARINE DIVISION
Commanding General's Message to All Hands:

For decades, Saddam Hussein has tortured, imprisoned, raped and murdered the Iraqi people; invaded neighboring countries without provocation; and threatened the world with weapons of mass destruction. The time has come to end his reign of terror. On your young shoulders rest the hopes of mankind.

When I give you the word, together we will cross the Line of Departure, close with those forces that choose to fight, and destroy them. Our fight is not with the Iraqi people, nor is it with members of the Iraqi army who choose to surrender. While we will move swiftly and aggressively against those who resist, we will treat all others with decency, demonstrating chivalry and soldierly compassion for people who have endured a lifetime under Saddam's oppression.

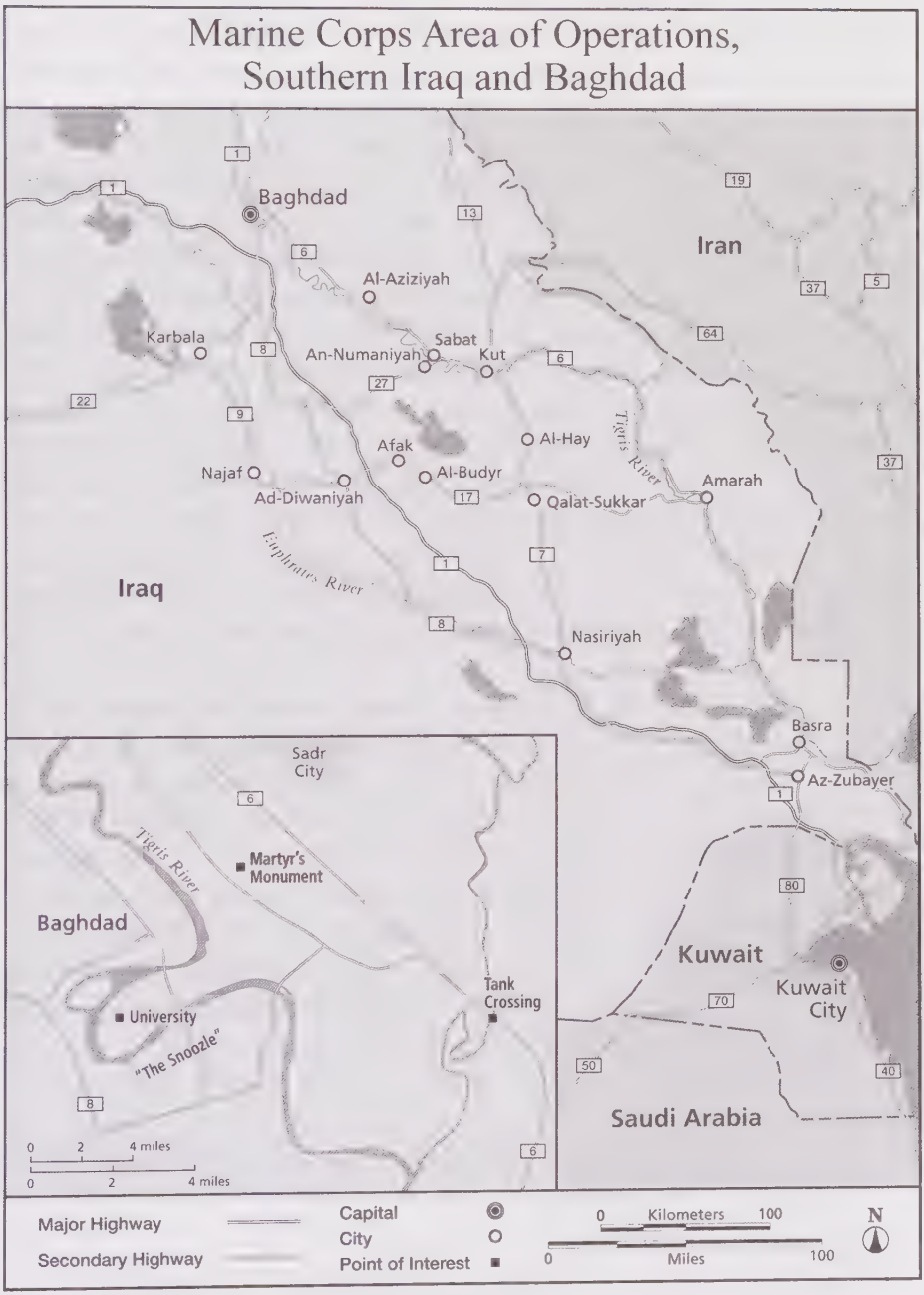
Chemical attack, treachery, and use of the innocent as human shields can be expected, as can other unethical tactics. Take it all in stride. Be the hunter, not the hunted: never allow your unit to be caught with its guard down. Use good judgment and act in the best interests of our Nation.

You are part of the world's most feared and trusted force. Engage your brain before you engage your weapon. Share your courage with each other as we enter the uncertain terrain north of the Line of Departure. Keep faith in your comrades on your left and right and Marine Air overhead. Fight with a happy heart and strong spirit.

For the mission's sake, our country's sake, and the sake of the men who carried the Division's colors in the past battles—who fought for life and never lost their nerve—carry out your mission and keep your honor clean. [You will] demonstrate to the world, there is "No Better Friend, No Worse Enemy" than a U.S. Marine.

J. N. Mattis
Major General, U.S. Marines[2]

2 General Mattis' "Step Off" letter to the 1st MARDIV, provided by the general to the author, January 2014.



Six Iraqi divisions stood guard in the Marine Corps' Area of Operational Responsibility (AOR). The traditional route for any invasion of Iraq moved along the Tigris River from Basra north to Baghdad. Saddam, therefore, positioned four of his divisions along that route. The fifth division was

deployed farther south near the Rumalia oil fields while the sixth and final division was based near the capital city of Baghdad. A few hours of aerial bombing set the war's clock ticking. The 1st Marine Division captured the oil fields before Saddam could even contemplate setting them afire.[3]

When the 1st MARDIV captured the Basra airport, the Iraqis were sure the offensive would follow the traditional route along the Tigris just as they anticipated. This was the first instance of maneuver warfare deception applied by the Corps. The Marines instead intended to advance toward Nasiriya and cross the river for a parallel advance with other friendly forces.[4] The British would be tasked with capturing Basra with secondary assistance from the Marines. On March 21, the coalition began its bombing campaign by targeting Saddam's palaces and ministries. This image of leadership decapitation was intended to demonstrate to the Iraqi people that it would be favorable to help overthrow the controlling Ba'athist regime. As the American forces advanced toward the Iraqi border, the regular Iraqi troops began falling apart. These troops were already exhausted with low morale, so when the allies advanced, they began stripping off their uniforms and infiltrating themselves back into the civilian population.[5]

The British, however, faced stout resistance when they arrived at the outskirts of Basra from regular forces and Fedayeen troops led by Saddam's son Uday. The Fedayeen were extremely loyal to the regime and considered an powerful Iraqi militia unit. The British besieged the city while allowing (and encouraging) the civilians to leave. Their MI-6 agents within the city did their best to incite a Shia uprising. The British wait-and-see posture took its toll on the allied coalition. Some American commanders argued that by not immediately advancing into Basra, Saddam looked stronger than he was to the local population, and perhaps invincible. The British defended their course of action by arguing it was designed to minimize civilian casualties.[6]

3 F. J. "Bing" West, "Maneuver Warfare: It Worked in Iraq, "*Proceedings,* a publication of the Naval Institute Press (February 2004), www.military.com/NewContent/0,13190,NI_WAR_ 0104,00.htm, accessed 27 May 2014).

4 Ibid.

5 General Ray Smith and F. J. "Bing" West, *The March Up: Taking Baghdad with the United States Marines* (New York: Bantam Books, 2003), 26, 258.

6 "UK Troops enter Basra," *Mail on Line News*, March 22, 2003, www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-175445/UK-troops-enter-Basra.html, accessed May 27, 2014.

The port of Umm Qasr at the head of the Persian Gulf below Basra was secured by the Marines with the 15th MEU in conjunction with the 3rd Commandos, Royal Marines. The capture of the port made it easy for the arrival of relief supplies sorely needed by the Iraqi people. As a result, international aid agencies (NGO's) began streaming these supplies through the port and into Iraq.

The I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF) was made up of a logistical support group, an air wing, and three basic ground maneuver units.[7] These units comprised the 1st Marine Division, a brigade-size force that was part of the 2nd Marine Division named Task Force Tarawa, and British forces that were just a bit more than a division. The Marine units were made up of both active-duty and reserve forces. Task Force Tarawa and the British were deployed in southern Iraq while the 1st MARDIV was slated to capture Baghdad. I MEF, which was supporting the coalition's main effort, was supposed to keep the Iraqis at bay so the Army's V Corps could make it to Baghdad with the least amount of Iraqi opposition.

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld announced the objectives of the military operations in Iraq. The points he made set the political end results supported by the Marine Corps doctrinal philosophy, strategy, and tactics adhered to in the prosecution of *Operation Iraqi Freedom*. The objectives Rumsfeld set forth were as follows:

1. Bring the reign of Saddam Hussein to an end;

2. Identify, separate and destroy Iraq's weapon of mass destruction;

3. Seek out, capture and eject terrorists from of Iraq;

4. Gather information that is pertinent to the terrorist network;

5. Gather information that relates to the global network of illegal weapons of mass destruction;

6. Put an end to the sanctions and immediately provide the displaced and needy Iraqis with relief support;

7 West, "Maneuver Warfare: It worked in Iraq."

7. Secure Iraq's oil fields and all resources, since they belonged to the people of Iraq;

8. Create such conditions that would enable the Iraqis to have good government.[8]

The I MEF captured the gas and oil separation plants, crude oil export facilities, and wells in the Rumalia oil fields. The oil infrastructure had been laced with booby traps Marines and British commandos defused and deconstructed. Oil fire-fighting units extinguished fires. This was in part in reaction to finding trenches filled with oil that had been deliberately set ablaze by the Iraqis, and some of the deserted oil plants that had been improperly shut down with oil overflowing into the station tanks. This posed a serious threat of fires if the oil came into contact with the burning wells. Marine Combat Engineers dealt with these issues (which was one of Rumsfeld's mission objectives for this operation).[9]

By March 23 the Marines were facing stiffening resistance at several locations. General Mattis had shifted the combat advance about 100 kilometers west for an assault along two highways running between the Euphrates and Tigris rivers. In other words, Mattis was abandoning the traditional invasion route into the country the Iraqis believed the Marines would take. Because it was widely believed the soggy landscape between the rivers could not bear the weight of tanks or artillery, Saddam had left it undefended. Mattis split the division into three units, each allocated 1,000 vehicles, to take advantage of the Iraqi leader's mistake. The Marines began moving north toward Baghdad.[10]

Because the highway infrastructures were worn out, the bridges had to be tested before Marine tanks and heavy equipment could cross. This slowed the Marines's advance and altered the timetable. In Nasiriya, meanwhile, the Marines engaged the Iraqis in sustained and heavy combat. The Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) arrived on station to reinforce them. In a friendly fire incident, aircraft accidentally struck one of the Marines' forward

8 Jim Garamone, "Rumsfeld Lists Operation Iraqi Freedom Aims, Objectives," *American Forces Press Service*, March 21, 2003, see www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=29253, accessed May 27, 2014.

9 West and Smith. *The March Up*, 183.

10 West, "Maneuver Warfare."

positions. The miscalculation was not only costly for the Marines but also killed many Iraqi civilians. Such events decreased the probability of civilians participating in the overthrow of the Saddam regime.[11]

The Forward Command Element of the Military Coordination and Liaison Command (MCLC) under the command of Marine Major General Pete Osman reached northern Iraq. There, General Osman convened meetings with key Iraqis and Kurdish opposition leaders. He informed them about U.S. intentions and explained the operational plans the Marines wanted the Kurds to carry out. The MCLC's presence in that area added stability, encouraged dialogue, and coordinated efforts among the organizations providing humanitarian assistance in northern Iraq. This success during the war's earliest days helped lay the framework for the Corps' efforts in nation-building and enemy pacification (or "light maneuver warfare").

According to General Osman, his mission there was three-fold: "First, to assist in the deconfliction of military activities. (This became a juggling act between the Turks, who were concerned with possible Kurdish nationalism, and the Kurds hoping to gain nation status supplying sixty thousand armed troops)," he explained. "Second," he continued, "to synchronize humanitarian assistance and military operations (the coordination of NGO's, the coalitions, and the needy Iraqis, Kurdish and non-Kurdish) . . . [and] Third, assist in the general coordination of relief operations in northern Iraq.[12]

Because the Iraqi air force and air defenses never materialized, the coalition's air dominance amounted to a major force multiplier. This aspect enhanced MAGTF intelligence gathering. It could now dispatch slow and vulnerable planes like the E-8C JSTARS close to the battlespace with the possibility of unlimited logistical support from refueling tankers. This significantly aided in shaping the battlefield for the Marine Corps. The JSTARS were fitted with Doppler radars with the ability to detect Iraqi ground formations and movements over hundreds of square miles. Intelligence was also gathered and merged from ground sources to give the precise positions of

11 West and Smith, *The March Up*; Col. John R. Andrews USMC, *Battle of An-Nasiriyah* (Washington DC: USMC History Div., PCN: 10600000700, 2004), 32-34. www.marines.mil/Portals/59/Publications/U.S.%20Marines%20in%20Battle An-Nasiriyah%20%20PCN%2010600000700_3.pdf, accessed May 27, 2014.

12 Ben Wedeman, CNN Correspondent, "Military Mission Coupled with Humanitarian Goals," CNN.Com Transcripts, aired March 25, 2003, http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0303/25/se.19.html, accessed on May 27, 2014.

Iraqi troops who mistakenly believed adverse weather conditions protected them from detection from the air. The continued air and ground campaign pressed on so fast that the Iraqi troops could not process, let alone handle, the F-16's and other fighters assaulting them regardless of weather conditions.[13]

The Iraqi Hammurabi, al Nida, and Medina divisions were hit the hardest during these assaults. The attacks ripped apart the cohesion of the Iraqis. There was no organized pattern of enemy maneuver because the enemy found it impossible to deal with the I MEF's rapid powerful advance. The Marine Corps' maneuver warfare doctrine was shaping the battlefield by confusing and dividing the enemy. The rapid tempo of contact and air support quickly enveloped the enemy.[14]

The I MEF captured a hospital near Nasiriya that had been transformed into a paramilitary headquarters, staging area, and storage center. Items recovered within the hospital campus included 200 weapons, Iraqi military uniforms, one tank, 3,000 chemical protective suits, and nerve agent antidote injectors. It appeared as though Iraq had been contemplating a chemical attack, but that the option was eliminated by the quick advance of the Marines.

Back below Basra, the Marines worked hard to expand the cleared channel of Khor Abdullah in the important port of Umm Qasr. It was while they were widening the water channel by 60 yards to obtain a route about 200 yards wide that the Marines discovered bottom influence mines. These subsurface programmable mines count the number of hulls passing over them, and, when a certain number is reached, detonate. Marine combat engineers cleared them from the channel and made the port secure for the arrival of the humanitarian assistance efforts.[15]

Marines and soldiers from the 3rd Marines, 101st Airborne, and 82nd Airborne Division, meanwhile, engaged the Iraqi regular army, Republican Guard, and Iraqi terror squads. The Marines also captured a bridge near the town of Al Handiyah. The bridge had been rigged with explosives in a bid to delay the coalition's advance. The Marine 2nd Brigade Combat Engineers

13 USMC MAGTF combines ground, logistic and air into a combined arms unit within the USMC ready forces. They fight as a Marine Corps unit. See: www.marines.com/operating-forces/structure for current status. The MAGTF becomes doctrinal in: MCDP 1-2 *Campaigning.*

14 MCDP 1, *Warfighting.*

15 Anthony H. Cordesman, *The Iraq War: Strategy, Tactics, and Military Lessons* (Prager, 2003), 78-80.

Team rid the bridge of explosives and once again preserved the Iraqi infrastructure.[16]

According to an April 1 status report, the Iraqi ground forces and their status were as follows:

Regular Army:

The Iraqi 4th Corps consisted of one armored division and two infantry divisions. Its headquarters and major command, control, communications and intelligence facilities had suffered massive damage due to the air strikes. Its armor and artillery had also been destroyed. It was making its way towards the U.S. Marines with units dispatched near Al Kut and Al Hillah and others around Najaf and Karbala.

The Iraqi 3rd Corps consisted of three divisions: one armored, one mechanized and one infantry. Its headquarters based in Nasiriya had been seized. The 51st Mechanized Division had been badly destroyed during the battle for Basra. The 11th Infantry Division had also been destroyed during an assault in Nasiriya. The 6th Armored Division had been hit in an air strike following an engagement with the U.S. Marines.

Republican Guard Forces:

The Iraqi 2nd Corps of the Republican Guards had their headquarters at the Al Hafreia and Al Fateh al Mubin Command Center. Most of its facilities had been destroyed by air strikes.

The Iraqi Medina Division, which had been the major threat for the advance of the 3rd Mechanized Division, was made up of three brigades. These included the 2nd and 3rd Armored and 14th Mechanized. Most of its communication facilities, artillery and equipment had been hit hard from the air. The unit was perceived to have lost between 35 to 65 percent of its effectiveness.

The Iraqi Nebuchadnezzar Infantry Division was usually based at Al Husseinia al-Kut. However, with the advance of the U.S. Marines, it shifted west to counter the threat. It also had its headquarters bombed along with its key communication facilities, artillery and other major equipment. Its effectiveness had been reduced by approximately 10 to 20 percent.

16 Operation Iraqi Freedom, March 31, Day Twelve, *GlobalSecurity.org* (2003), see www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/iraqi_freedom_d12.htm.

> The Iraqi 2nd Baghdad Infantry Division which was usually based at Maqloob Maontin Mosul shifted their attention to the Al Kut area where the U.S. Marines had engaged them in serious combat. It suffered the same losses as the other forces as it lost its headquarters, key facilities, and artillery to air strikes. It had lost 20 to 40 percent effectiveness in the war.
>
> The Iraqi Hammurabi Mechanized Division had departed Al Tajji region, and units that defended the Tikrit region were combating the 3rd Infantry and the U.S. Marines in Karbala and Najaf region when participation of the Medina Division became suicidal. However, its headquarters and facilities had not been spared either in the onslaught of air strikes. Its effectiveness had been reduced by 10 to 20 percent.[17]

As the above report makes obvious, the Marines' combined air and land attacks had crippled Iraqi operational capability. The strikes left a heavy Marine Corps footprint on every Iraqi division by striking at their headquarters and communication facilities—i.e., their center of gravity—and knocking out their command and control elements which, in turn, increased the fog and friction of war for the enemy. The Iraqis' lack of coordination and destruction of their artillery assets left them incapable of much beyond sporadic attacks.[18]

The American forces continued advancing toward the Iraqis' main defensive positions east of the Euphrates. Two Marine Corps regimental combat units were positioned on Highway 1 facing Baghdad, where the Iraqis had dispatched a division to block the road. General Mattis instead used a side road (a critical application of maneuver warfare strategy) and the Marines crossed the Tigris between the artillery fans of the Iraqi forces.[19]

Qusay Hussein, Saddam's son, convened a meeting in Baghdad with General Raad al-Hamdani, the Iraqi commander of the region and one of Saddam's favorite commanders. Qusay lectured al-Hamdani that the coalition military action thus far had been a case of strategic deception, and that the main assault would come from north of Baghdad. The general thought little of Qusay's conclusion. As far as he was concerned, the Americans were attacking from the south in force, and he protested as much. The Americans, he urged, would be in Baghdad within 48 hours unless troops were not moved quickly into the Karbala gap to stop them. General al-Hamdani, of course, had no

17 Cordesman, *The Iraq War*, 85-91.

18 MCDP 1, *Warfighting*.

19 Mattis, telephone interview with the author.

choice but to obey Qusay's orders. By this time the coalition forces had seized bridges over the Euphrates River and their tanks were in position to drive toward the capital. Despite this, Qusay ordered al-Hamdani to reject earlier advice and turn his troops around to counter the non-existent American northern threat, and counterattack enemy forces to the south. Hamdani chose the best brigade out of the Republican Guard for the hopeless task. The night assault that followed on April 2-3 was repulsed with catastrophic losses while not a single casualty was reported by the Marine Corps.[20]

Forces from the U.S. Army's 3rd Infantry arrived at the Baghdad International Airport and captured it. The effort was met with young Iraqi fanatics of the Fadeyeen militia who put up stiff resistance for a short time. Most of them, however, were killed in the attack.

The Marines were tentative about their final assault into the city of Baghdad. The question as to the location of units of the Republican Guard bothered them. The commands had been positioned south of the city, and the Marines had bypassed many of them en route to Baghdad. When that became obvious, it was also apparent that the mission against the city could not begin without this threat being neutralized. A Marine brigade was deployed south of the city to deal with it.[21]

As it turned out, most of the Republican Guard forces had been hidden among palm groves to deter detection from the air reconnaissance assets. The combined air strikes had not been bombing the correct positions. The Marine advance to Baghdad had been extremely rapid (a prime maneuver warfare tactic), and it caught the Medina Division by surprise because General Mattis attacked from a direction the Iraqi division at al-Kut never anticipated. Now they were attacking from the north and the dug-in Iraqi tanks were facing once more in the wrong direction; the Medina Division had no choice but to retreat.[22]

On April 5 Baghdad was in the middle of a surprise armed reconnaissance pull (referred to as a "Thunder Run") on the orders of General Mattis. The heavily armed Marines were directed to press as far into Baghdad as possible. The speeds at which these "Thunder Runs" were conducted unhinged the Iraqi

20 Rusiya al-Yaum, "Interview with Raad Al-Hamdani," RT NEWS, April 10, 2008, see http://rt.com/news/interview-with-raad-al-hamdani/, accessed May 27, 2014

21 Michael R. Gordon and Bernard E. Trainor, "U.S. Generals Divided as War Began," *Leatherneck Magazine,* March 12, 2006, www.leatherneck.com/forums/archive/index.php/t-27452.html, accessed May 27, 2014.

22 Mattis, telephone interview with the author.

army and created an imbalance they never saw coming. The Marines met with morning commuter traffic coupled with Iraqi troops who had shed their uniforms and were now dressed in civilian clothes in an effort to flee. It was not easy identifying the Iraqi forces from the civilians. By midday, the Marines had bobbed and weaved their way through the southwestern suburbs of the city all the way to Baghdad International Airport.[23]

The I MEF, meanwhile, did its best to isolate Baghdad. This denied the Iraqi insurgents any escape routes or reinforcements. While the U.S. Army's V Corps controlled the regional gap between Karbala and Baghdad in the east, the Marines controlled the corridor running from Salman Park to Baghdad. The Marines conducted aggressive assaults in a bid to secure the cities that lay on the way into central Baghdad. The 1st Brigade Combat Team captured a palace that was believed to be the headquarters of the Special Republican Guard, further crippling their operations capability.[24]

In Baghdad, the Army's V Corps was joined by the Marine Corps. Ordered to attack to the east of the city, they advanced expecting fierce resistance that never materialized. For the most part, the Iraqi forces had simply melted away. The employment of a Marine Corps Way of War had significantly reduced Marine losses and the prolonged costs of attritional war.[25]

The Coalition Forces Land Component Commander (CFLCC) had ordered that raids be conducted into Baghdad rather than to seize it. Ready to get back to their rapid tempo of combat, the Marines had sufficient tanks and three regiments poised to comply with the mission commander's intent. Carrying out raids on the already damaged Iraqi infrastructure, however, made little sense to I MEF and 1st MARDIV. The Marines were there to liberate Baghdad; they had no intention of besieging it. I MEF, therefore, divided Baghdad into 36 zones, identifying "targets of interest" in each one. Three regiments were deployed across the bridge into Baghdad with orders to attack from one zone to the next until every zone had been overrun and occupied.[26]

The air campaign concentrated on kill-box interdiction, which involved the perpetual bombing of ground targets, close air support, command control,

23 "Operation Iraqi Freedom: The Six Week invasion of Iraq," a Frontline documentary (2003), www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/invasion/cron/, accessed May 27, 2014.

24 Mattis, telephone interview with the author.

25 See Bill Lind quote re Gen. Smith in Chapter 2.

26 West, "Maneuver Warfare."

intelligence, and surveillance missions. Planes conducting the reconnaissance missions made Baghdad their focus so that emerging targets could be dealt with immediately. A fifth of the air strikes were aimed at insuring the Iraqi forces were not able to launch any aircraft. After the first "Thunder Run," the Marines realized the Iraqis were unable to deal with an attack from a direction they were not expecting. The Marines thus focused on "Thunder Runs" aimed at the Iraqi rear. These ultimately led to the capturing of Baghdad earlier than expected and with minimum casualties.[27]

The Marines on the other side of Baghdad, meanwhile, conducted another "Thunder Run" into the city. This time they took a direct route toward the palaces, a decision that threw the Iraqi defenders into further panic. The Army's 3rd ID followed the Marines' two tank battalions and captured and held three major clover-leafs dubbed "Moe," "Larry," and "Curly" to keep the roads secure for the arrival of Marine logistical resupply trucks. Marines spent that night in one of Hussein's palaces. In less than a month, U.S. and Coalition forces had reached the geographic heart of the Ba'athist regime.

These "Thunder Runs" were a successful and effective application of maneuver warfare. The combination of the three Marine brigades destroyed 30 military vehicles, 30 technical vehicles, three T-72 tanks, and three armored personnel carriers. The I MEF also eliminated an enemy training camp near Salman Park. According to intelligence reports, this camp had been used by the Iraqis to train foreign forces in the tactics of terrorism and irregular warfare.

By April 10–11, the Coalition had stripped Baghdad of all resistance and was moving north out of the capital toward the city of Tikrit along the western side of the Tigris River. Neither the V Corps nor I MEF experienced serious Iraqi resistance en route there. U.S. intelligence confirmed that most of the Republican Guard had been destroyed. There was no doubt that one of the Republican Guard's brigades, together with elements of the Special Republican Guard, were still in the Tikrit area, however. Many of the combat units of the Iraqi Army had come under heavy air strikes but no substantial ground attack and so remained a threat to Coalition forces. Several more of the 10 Iraqi Regular Army divisions had either surrendered or simply collapsed. The V Corps and I MEF only encountered a single brigade of the Adnan Division of the Republican Guard, which was based in Tikrit. What was left of

27 "Operation Iraqi Freedom," Frontline documentary.

the division did not pose a major threat. (It had been deemed a "mediocre" fighting unit by Coalition intelligence even before the bombing raids.)

It still remains unclear why Saddam left the bulk of his army to the north to be eliminated by Coalition airstrikes even after it had had to have become obvious Coalition forces were not going to invade south out of Turkey. In all likelihood Saddam had no idea where the Coalition forces would strike next, and the speed of the campaign surprised and overwhelmed him. The American military was nothing like the Iranian military, as he quickly discovered to his detriment. This strategy helped ward off imminent threats to the Marines' advance while exposing the Iraqi regular forces to heavy air attacks. The feint from the north distracted the Iraqis and masked the true nature of the invasion.[28]

Maneuver warfare as practiced by the Marine Corps was applied in this war via mission-type orders. In other words, the commander explains the mission to be carried out, but does not provide specific tactical details about how to accomplish the mission's objectives. General Mattis had discussed his plan with the entire division prior to the commencement of the war. Each Marine had more than a basic idea of his overall intent.[29] In other meetings held before the war, the three regimental commanders went over the various selected routes and objectives again and again. Once the war started, each commander worked independently (with Generals Mattis or John Kelly, his deputy, looking in on the regiments as the war progressed). The battalions also had maneuver warfare independence. Tactically speaking the distance between the regiments was quite far. This, coupled with the shortage of helicopters and heavy road traffic, made centralized control extremely difficult and essentially impossible. Centralized control, however, was not a philosophical option, for the Marines had arrived ready to execute the operational art of Generals Gray and Krulak's "fighting smarter" doctrine.[30]

There is a reason *Operation Iraqi Freedom* has been called "The Colonels' War." Regimental and battalion commanders were the major decision-makers during the operations. Every night each battalion gathered separately. The battalion commander and his sergeant major visited with their subordinates. Patrolling was only allowed during security missions or during combat in open

28 Operation Iraqi Freedom, Frontline documentary.

29 West, "ManeuverWarfare."

30 Mattis and Kelly, interviews with the author.

terrain. Battalion commanders were to direct movement of their particular companies. Decentralized control fostered the furtherance of the Marine Corps Way of War. All of this meant that the 1st MARDIV applied maneuver warfare under decentralized control coupled with mission-type orders, and *Operation Iraqi Freedom* was a successful application of maneuver warfare rendered the Iraqi army completely ineffective in less than a month's time.[31]

On the 1st of May, President Bush officially announced an end to military operations in Iraq. Technically speaking, he was addressing the end of conventional warfare. The enemy had been militarily defeated and its armies were no longer in the field. For all intents and purposes, this part of the operation was indeed a "mission accomplished." As conventional warfare ceased, however, Iraqi began its rapid internal collapse, experiencing what Carl von Clausewitz had called a war of "national interests."[32]

The vacuum created by the decapitation of Saddam's Ba'athist regime needed to be filled, and many factions vied for political control that would ultimately lead to the rise of insurgency and irregular warfare. This destabilization made humanitarian supplies all the more urgent, and plans for the reconstruction of Iraq's infrastructure and government began. This operation was credited as one of the most successful applications of "Small War" maneuver warfare exercised by the Marine Corps since Gulf War I.

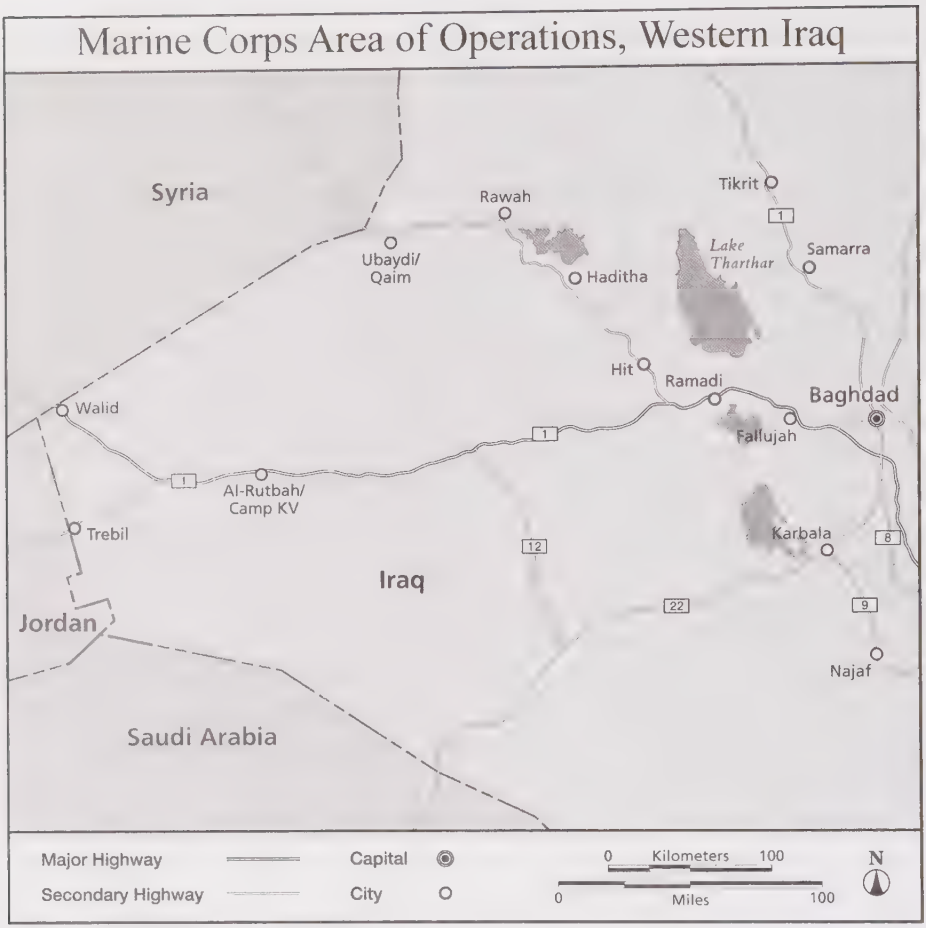
From Conventional to Irregular Warfare: The Marine Corps Moves Away from the Basics Found in its "Small War" DNA

Fallujah is a major city in the bottom center of the so-called "Sunni Triangle," a heavily populated area northwest of Baghdad comprised mostly of Sunni Muslims.[33] Fallujah itself is densely populated and was decimated by the Coalition's air campaigns in 2003. By 2004, it was a haven for Islamic insurgents, weapon smugglers, criminals, and foreign terrorists. Coalition troops within Iraq struggled to contain these insurgents. When protesting

31 *Organization of Marine Corps Forces,* (MCRP) 5-12D (Washington, DC: HQ Marine Corps, 1998). This directive superseded (FMFRP) 1-11, *Fleet Marine Force Organization 1992.*

32 Paret, *On War,* 479-483.

33 The Sunni Triangle roughly encompasses Baqubah in the east, Baghdad in the south, and Tikrit in the north.



civilians were massacred in front of a schoolhouse in April, U.S. forces withdrew to the city's perimeter. Iraqi leadership within Fallujah requested the Americans remain on the outskirts of the city and let the locals deal with the security issues within the city. Coalition leadership ignored this request.[34]

The Iraqi militia, however, refused to cooperate with the U.S.-led Coalition. That February, resistance fighters had attacked a Coalition-sponsored Iraqi police center. The well-organized attack was carried out during daylight hours and left 23 soldiers dead and freed many insurgent prisoners. Iraqi militias openly patrolled the streets of Fallujah, but the militia units were

34 Jeremy Scahill, *Blackwater: The Rise of the World's Most Powerful Mercenary Army* (New York: Nation Books, 2007), 53-99. Also see, http://blackblawg.blogspot.com/2007/10/2004-fallujah-incident-was-ambush.html, accessed May 27, 2014.

sectarian- and tribal-driven, and thus unreliable as a partner for peace within the city.[35]

The I Marine Expeditionary Force was given the mission to pacify Fallujah when the 82nd Airborne was rotated out. General Mattis set the tone for this deployment with the following "to all hands" letter. Once again, the evidence of Marine Corps DNA and the Marine Corps Way of War was obvious:

March 23, 2004

Letter to all Hands:

We are going back into the brawl. We will be relieving the magnificent soldiers fighting under the 82nd Airborne Division, whose hard won successes in the Sunni Triangle have opened opportunities for us to exploit. For the last year, the 82nd Airborne has been operating against the heart of the enemy's resistance. It's appropriate that we relieve them.

When it's time to move a piano, Marines don't pick up the piano bench—we move the piano. So, this is the right place for Marines in this fight, where we can carry on the legacy of Chesty Puller in the Banana Wars in the same sort of complex environment that he knew in his early years. Shoulder to shoulder with our comrades in the Army, Coalition Forces and maturing Iraqi Security Forces, we are going to destroy the enemy with precise firepower while diminishing the conditions that create adversarial relationships between us and the Iraqi people. This is going to be hard, dangerous work. It is going to require patient, persistent presence. Using our individual initiative, courage, moral judgment and battle skills, we will build on the 82nd Airborne's victories.

Our country is counting on us even as our enemies watch and calculate, hoping that America does not have warriors strong enough to withstand discomfort and danger. You, my fine young men, are going to prove the enemy wrong—dead wrong. You will demonstrate the same uncompromising spirit that has always caused the enemy to fear America's Marines.

The enemy will try to manipulate you into hating all Iraqis. Do not allow the enemy that victory. With strong discipline, solid faith, unwavering alertness, and undiminished chivalry to the innocent, we will carry out this mission. Remember, I have added, "First, do no harm" to our passwords of "No Better Friend, No Worse

35 Mattis and Conway, interviews with the author.

> Enemy." Keep your honor clean as we gain information about the enemy from the Iraqi people. Then, armed with that information and working in conjunction with fledging Iraqi Security Forces, we will move precisely against the enemy elements and crush them without harming the innocent.
>
> This is our test, our Guadalcanal, our Chosin Reservoir, our Hue City. Fight with a happy heart and keep faith in your comrades and your unit. We must be under no illusions about the nature of the enemy and the dangers that lie ahead. Stay alert, take it all in stride, remain sturdy, and share your courage with each other and the world. You are going to write history, my fine young Sailors and Marines, so write it well.
>
> Semper Fidelis,
>
> J. M. Mattis,
> Major General, U.S. Marines[36]

The I MEF immediately moved to impose the Coalition's will over the residents of Fallujah, nearly all of whom were against foreign occupation. General Mattis had already set forth a plan on how to deal with the Fallujah threat in what he termed a "handover" ceremony.[37]

The idea was to have the Marines establish friendly contacts with the Iraqis while at the same time giving those Iraqis who wanted to fight the opportunity to die for their beliefs. Mattis' recollection of this provides a clear picture of this situation. "I got the order on November 10th that we were going back in, this time to replace the 82nd Airborne Division and would be in al Anbar Province," he explained. "I lost only two men killed by enemy fire down in al Kut. And those were probably killed by criminals to tell you the truth, not even real enemy. So we had managed to stay friendly one month longer, one week longer, one day longer, one hour longer than some of the distrustful Arabs thought we could and it had paid off." General Mattis continued:

> Going back in to al Anbar was very different and I sent in my Assistant Division Commander, John Kelly, and he came back and he said it's going to be difficult but he said we could turn al Anbar around. And so we went back in and there was a young Army major named Adam Souk and he identified a tribe out in the west, the

36 General Mattis' Step Off letter (Fallujah II) to the Marines 1st Div., January 2014.

37 Mattis, telephone interview by author.

al-DhaFeer tribe which had risen up against us. And at the start of the meeting . . . we keep telling the Sheiks we know you're fighting against us, that you're in bed with the wrong people. You're going to rue the day they hooked up with the al Qaeda.

Day by day we keep fighting and talking and fighting and talking and this goes on. But Adam Souk has identified the al-DhaFeer Tribe and then a Marine Lt. Colonel, Terry Alpert out at Al Kine where a lot of Sunnis . . . due to the Sunni-Shia fighting are willing to work with the Marines. They realize now the Marines are their best hope as Sunnis in a country dominated by Shia.

It still takes us a long time of intense fighting but what happens is, again, the enemy makes . . . what you and I would call a gross blunder . . . and the killing of children, young boys, and the killing of a Sheik who wasn't even on our side, by the way. He was clearly not on our side but he also hated al Qaeda and by the time they were done they'd made enough mistakes that eventually they turned in 2005.[38]

Just two days after their arrival, the Marines were engaged in fierce street battles with Iraqis in the al-Askari neighborhood of Fallujah. The battle went on for hours and left one Marine dead and seven others wounded against 15 dead Iraqis and an unknown number of injured. The Marines mounted a crackdown on the entire city. This limited the Fallujah inhabitants' options to abandoning their earlier reservations and surrendering to this foreign occupation, leaving the city, or putting up a resistance. (Some of them opted to leave, but still maintained their fanatical hatred for foreign occupation.)[39]

The more the inhabitants died, the more the remaining Iraqis became emboldened in their attacks against the Marines. "In al Anbar it was almost uniquely designed for Marines because we explained to the insurgents, 'Hey, number one, if you want to fight for honor, we're eager to pay for honor," explained General Mattis, who continued on the subject:

Bring it on. We will kill every one of you and you will regret it. But number two, we know what it's like to be a minority, trust us. In the U.S. Military we're a minority and we can teach you how to survive and keep your ethos if you want to listen. And eventually I go back there and guys come up and hug me and say, remember me, you put me in Abu Ghraib prison. I said yeah, I told you it would turn out [that] we're really

38 Mattis, telephone interview with the author.

39 Colonel Gary W. Montgomery and CWO-4 Timothy S. McWilliams, *Al-Anbar Awakening: Iraqi Perspectives from Insurgency to Counterinsurgency* (Quantico: Marine Corps University Press, 2009), 152-175.

> your friends. And it worked. So that's kind of the path it eventually took. . . . This is going to sound like modesty now. Any Marine who had been brought up by Puller and Zinni and Al Gray and Van Riper who had lance corporals like I had and NCOs like I had, any of us could have done this. I simply was at the right place at the right time,
>
> I could see how they [al Qaeda] had screwed it up . . . pretty soon I didn't care how brave the enemy was or how many guns they had or how short they cut their hair, they were going to die because they had dumb generals.[40]

Another incident occurred about this time in the Gaza Strip that further fanned the flames of resistance within Fallujah when Israeli troops assassinated the wheelchair-bound Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, The founder and spiritual leader of the terrorist group Hamas was hit by a missile from an Israeli attack helicopter. Six people in his entourage were also killed. The world media referred to the killing as a "targeted assassination," which angered Muslims throughout the world. Muslin clerics issued a fatwah for jihad against any foreign occupation. Many Muslims believed all foreign occupiers in Iraq were allied to the Israelis, and so would sooner or later unleash violence on them as part of a so-called "hidden agenda." The United States in particular ("The Great Satan" to many in the Islamic world) was believed to be working hand-in-hand with the Israelis. This belief, coupled with the abuses being reported about prisoner treatment at Abu Ghraib, together with other civilian killings of innocent Iraqis, added fuel to the growing fire. Negative feelings toward the Marines worsened and led to more house-to-house search operations. The Marines sealed off the entrances to the city with tanks and armored vehicles in a bid to stop more resistance forces from slipping in to join the fight for Fallujah. Graffiti in praise of the resistance appeared on walls while Muslim clerics publicly echoed their support for the resistance.[41]

Across much of Iraq, hospitals, schools, and electric power stations were being built, yet Fallujah's inhabitants would have none of it. On March 31, 2004, a catalyst event took place when four Blackwater private American military contractors were killed and mutilated and hung from a bridge. Five US soldiers had been killed a few days earlier. These highly publicized events encouraged the terrorist locals and enraged Coalition forces. It was rapidly

40 Mattis, telephone interview with the author.

41 John Borger, "Israel Trains US Assassination Squads in Iraq," *The Guardian,* December 8, 2003, see www.theguardian.com/world/2003/dec/09/iraq.israel, accessed May 27, 2014.

becoming clear the Marines were never going to win the trust and affection of that city's people. The result was the decision to put an end to the friendly contacts and employ maximum force to flush out the terrorists and kill them. It was in this spirit that *Operation Vigilant Resolve* (or the First Battle of Fallujah) was launched. The Marines wanted to finish what they had started and would use the operation to restore some semblance of order in Fallujah. Elements of the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines assaulted Fallujah's industrial center on April 4 while the 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines drove south through the northwestern urban district. Serious resistance was encountered, and the battle reached its peak by April 10.[42]

The move to abandon the original war plan and wage a retaliatory war did not sit well with General Mattis. He believed that such a move would give the insurgents what they wanted and that the Marines would never win in that environment. By an unfortunate twist of fate, a Shia rebellion by the Mahdi Army took place in part of Baghdad that had nothing to do with the Marine presence in Iraq. The Al Jazeera news network superimposed the uprising and urban firefights over the Marine operations in Fallujah to paint *Operation Vigilant Resolve* in a negative light and connected to the Shia events in Baghdad. Matters were made even worse for the Marines because their logistical supplies of fuel, ammunition, and water were steadily decreasing, which in turn made it more difficult to keep up with the tempo of this battle. President Bush ordered what some think was a premature end to *Operation Vigilant Resolve*.[43]

Generally speaking, the operation had been approached with so much passion that the Marine Corps' "Small War" logic was overlooked. The troops in general were out for revenge. This mindset led them to make decisions that were misinformed and the results were not what the Marines had hoped to achieve. Earlier plans had been abandoned for new ones intended to make Fallujah an example as quickly as possible.[44]

42 Ross W. Simpson, "Fallujah: A Four Letter Word," *Leatherneck Magazine,* 2005. See www.mca-marines.org/leatherneck/fallujah-four-letter-word, accessed May 27, 2014. Brigadier General Mark Kimmitt, who was the deputy director of U.S. military operations in Iraq, vowed an "overwhelming" response. Marine commanders were against the order to move into the city because they wanted to launch precision strikes against those responsible.

43 Simpson, "Fallujah, A Four Letter Word."

44 Ibid.

The hard lessons learned from *Operation Vigilant Resolve* would eventually lead to success in future operations in Fallujah and elsewhere in Iraq. Among the lessons learned were the following:

1. Information operations (IO) were a strong determinant of success on today's battlefield, and their effect on every lethal or non-lethal decision called for deep consideration;

2. Commanders need to seriously think about the consequences of their decisions, and always bear in mind that the failure to make a decision is itself a decision made;

3. The doctrine must be followed to the letter because that is the reason it was promulgated;

4. Keen eyes must always be maintained on logistical support;

5. When battling with a host nation in a counter insurgency (COIN), there is a need to start the battle together, to stick together, and to finish the combat together;

6. The young leaders in brigades, battalions, and regiments have a remarkable ability to fight jointly with superior effectiveness in the current situations of the battlefield. Senior leaders must support them in their maneuvers.[45]

The Iraqi Fallujah Brigade, which had been put in place to aid in the security of the city, turned out to be a terrible mistake. Its leadership often acted in concert with the insurgents. The brigade eventually became an enemy within as its members shifted their loyalty from the Coalition to the insurgents, which allowed the insurgents to gain more traction and flourish. From this, the Marines learned the hard way that Iraqi forces were utterly incapable of controlling the city. If any order was to be achieved, it would not be obtained from the Iraqi leadership in Fallujah.[46]

45 Mattis, telephone interview with the author.

46 Ibid.

The Return to the Marine Corps' DNA

The insurgents thought the withdrawal of the Marines after President Bush's stop order meant they were now free to go about their business as usual. They were mistaken. A second operation was organized to remedy this situation. As Fallujah deteriorated and became the de facto Sunni insurgent capital in Iraq, the Marines determined to visit its bloody streets once more. This time the operation was more carefully planned with no outright apparent saber rattling. Fallujah was packed with enemy troops, but that also made it a target-rich environment. A special operation was prepared and initiated. The media did not give it as much coverage as they had Vigilant Resolve. This fact helped establish an IO Threshold. An IO Threshold is a non-doctrinal term that refers to the boundary below which the media's attention is caught and above which has little value to the media. The employment of this concept played a significant role in this and subsequent operations.

The manner in which the media covers a war is always important, and this war was no different. In fact, it played an especially important role in Iraq. For example, here are two observations on the work of the media. Both describe the magnitude of intentional media manipulation:

> "I say that we are in a battle, and that more than half of this battle is taking place in the battlefield of the media. And that we are in a media battle in a race for the hearts and minds of our Umma." Ayman al-Zawahiri to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, July 9, 2005

> "If I were grading I would say we probably deserve a 'D' or a 'D-plus' as a country as to how well we're doing in the battle of ideas that's taking place in the world today." — Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, March 27, 2006[47]

As the violence in Fallujah escalated, the insurgency rapidly spread to other regions in Iraq, including Mosul and Ramadi. The Sunni rebels were in an advantageous position for disrupting the Coalition troops' vital supply route into Baghdad. Recapturing Fallujah, the insurgency's center, was now the only option available to the Coalition.

47 Lieutenant General R. P. MILLS USMC, CG, *Marine Corps Operating Concept for Information Operations* (Quantico: Marine Corps Combat Development Command, 2013), 14.

The strategy and tactics for retaking Fallujah were to be left solely to the Marine Corps. Supplies in Iraq were increased twofold. For example, the storage of diesel fuel rose from 7,000,000 gallons to 15,000,000 gallons. The same was true for fresh water and ammunition. Subordinate commanders throughout the Corps were involved in the drafting of this new battle plan. The operation was code-named Phantom Fury, and it would be launched with a new end-state in mind.[48]

There was some concern raised over the fact that the launching of the operation almost coincided with the beginning of the Iraqi national elections. With the complete support of the entire command structure, there were several options that presented themselves. The special commands gave important real-time intelligence while Iraqi battalions were recruited, equipped, and trained. The 1st Cavalry's Blackjack Brigade Combat Team did not leave as early as planned. One of the United Kingdom's battalions was dispatched southeast of Fallujah in a bid to free more Marines for the coming Second Battle for Fallujah. The Coalition managed to win over not only Prime Minister Allawi, but gain the confidence of the fledgling Iraqi government. This made the upcoming operation easier by doing away with the ineffective Fallujah Brigade, putting into place a 24-hour curfew, and prohibiting the possession of arms inside Fallujah.

The Iraqis called the plan Operation al-Fajr, which translates to "*Operation Daybreak*." The name came from a passage in the Quran that spoke to the return of the evil people to the light of Allah through His grace. In an effort to solidify the support of Iraqi leaders, the plan's name was changed to *Operation New Dawn*.[49]

The Marines worked hard to prepare for the operation and the teamwork exercised among the Coalition forces proved to be simply outstanding. Information Operations, however, still caused some concern. Generally speaking, the forces met most of the standards in the IO domain. The deception feints and the psychological operations were carried out with great success. Almost 90 percent of the population agreed to leave Fallujah before the battle

48 Dick Camp, *Operation Phantom Fury: The Assault and Capture of Fallujah, Iraq* (Minneapolis: Zenith Press, 2009), 123-156.

49 For one of the best books on this operation, see Richard S. Lowry, *New Dawn: The Battles for Fallujah* (El Dorado Hills, CA: Savas Beatie, 2010), 48, 106.

began, though the exodus of 200,000 people also raised humanitarian concerns.[50]

The efforts aimed at electronic warfare were just as well executed. The Coalition had the airwaves at their disposal, listening to anything they wished and jamming the airwaves to prevent the insurgents from easily exchanging information. The insurgents were still mostly laboring under the mistaken belief the Marines would not attack, and that even if they did, they could never succeed inside Fallujah. The pre-positioning of massive combat power was something that could not be easily concealed, but operational security was under full control by the IO efforts. This helped drive the insurgents into a state of high confusion before and during the battle.

One of the reasons *Operation Vigilant Resolve* was called to an early halt and thus failed was because of the negative press it generated, much of it derived from baseless propaganda.[51] As a result, great care was taken this time around regarding media influence. The Marines Corps' intrinsic trust in its troops left no doubt they would adhere to their doctrinal rules of engagement. The tactical element of the battle was now in the hands of their operational commanders. The Marines would not let the media interfere with the operation until the enemy was defeated.[52]

On the night of November 4, 2004, the Marines of Task Force Wolfpack sped north in their LAVs, M1A1 Abrams tanks, and trucks heading for the "Shark's Fin," a large peninsula west of Fallujah. Four Marine infantry battalions with the reserve support of two Army mechanized task forces were poised to attack the city from the north. In this particular operation the surprise element of maneuver warfare was impossible to achieve. The insurgents knew they were coming and had prepared for the inevitable assault. Barricades had been erected, IEDs placed, and trenches dug in preparation for the battle. There were more than 4,000 Jihadi warriors inside the city determined to fight and if necessary, die there. The Marines were more than willing to accommodate both desires.

The attack came on November 8 when two Marine regiments began their sweep into the city. The Regimental Combat Team 1 (RCT-1) was preceded by the Army's 2-7 Cavalry northwest of the city, and the Army's 2-2 Infantry

50 Gates, *Duty: Memoirs of a Secretary at War*, 473.

51 Mills, USMC IO historical exmple, 14.

52 Ibid.

Battalion played out an assault to the east of the city in association with the Marines' RCT-7.[53]

One of the major aspects of maneuver warfare that stands out today is the integration of MAGTF Close Air Support (CAS) during the course of this complex operation. The integration proved almost seamless. The CAS plan was founded on the Marine Corps C2 basics involving procedural control and unity of command, which was made even more effective with a common map or Grid Reference Graphic (GRG). This widened the spectrum of the capability of aviation precision weapons and targeting technology. Therefore, a fixed-wing CAS was a necessary option for the supporting fires in this operation, further emphasizing the urgent need for tactical aviation (TacAir) for the Marines.[54]

The main assault began with the dropping of targeted munitions from the F/A-18Ds of Marine Fighter All Weather Squadron 242. The eight GBU 31s joint direct attack munitions (JDAMS) each weighed 2,000 pounds. The goal was to breach the massive railway berm north of Fallujah to clear lanes of approach for the 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines. In the follow-on battle, as the Marines, soldiers, and Coalition forces engaged in bloody house-to-house fighting, supporting fire proved steady and precise. The airstrikes acted in complete harmony with the ground fire. The penetrating attack proceeded as the commanders intended it to go.[55]

The attack launched into Fallujah was maneuver warfare at its best. The Fallujah battlefield was difficult because of the specter of counterinsurgency and the collateral damage that could result from the combat, which was expected to heavy. In order to win the favor of the many observers of the war and the Iraqi civilians, keeping collateral damage to a minimum was very important. This was not an easy task. The nature of the fighting also increased the chance of friendly fire incidents. Ten battalions of Coalition troops were operating within the five kilometer square that made up Fallujah. Its buildings resembled one another in their low heights and same brownish-gray hue. The

53 Lowry, *New Dawn*, 106.

54 MCRP 5-12D.

55 Maj Fred H. Allison, USMCR, "Close Air Support," *Marine Corps Gazette,* Volume 92, Issue 10, October 2008. See www.mca-marines.org/gazette/2008/10/close-air-support, accessed May 27, 2014.

risks of a mistake were high, but it did not deter the Marines from employing close air support in the 2nd Battle for Fallujah.[56]

Historically, tactical strike fighters were the major strong points of the close air support, but their employment in urban counterinsurgency combat was considered dangerous and thus generally avoided. The advent of precision ordnance alongside sophisticated targeting systems, however, brought CAS to the insurgent forces successfully. It was a calculated warfare risk, and one that had to be taken at this juncture in the fighting.

Tactical jets are capable of surgical CAS because their great speed and high operating altitudes reduce their vulnerability to enemy fire. In Fallujah, the enemy's anti-air capability was almost nothing, limited as it was to small arms and rocket-propelled grenades. The new application presented in this operation was the JDAM. This ordnance is rarely used in urban warfare, but in the event that a group of insurgents jammed themselves into a building, or coalition artillery and other sources of fire could not neutralize them fast enough, JDAMS would be the air weapons of choice in Fallujah for the Marines.[57]

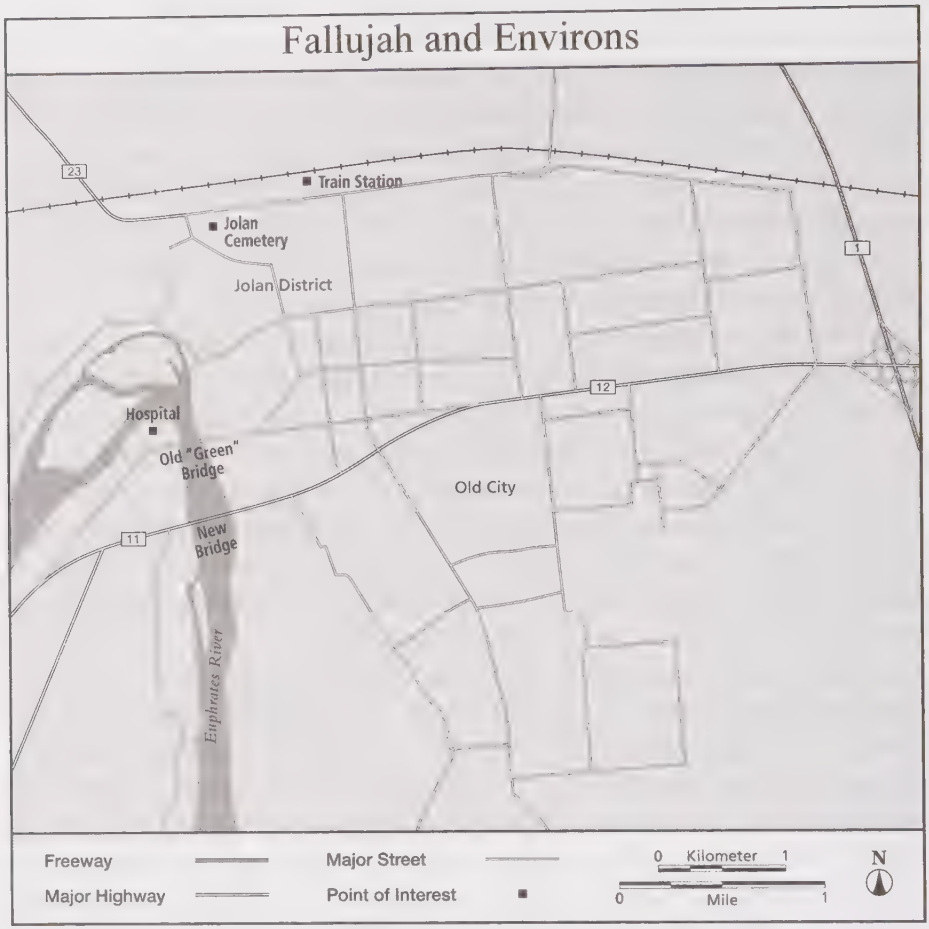
When it was necessary to resort to the traditional attack of an area, strafing from low-flying aircraft was the preferred method to kill or intimidate the enemy. The Marines' TacAir AV-8B Harriers and F/A-18D Hornets had not yet been deployed. When the battle began and RCT-1 was in urgent need of a fixed-wing CAS, the Combined Forces Air Component Commander (CFACC) of CENTCOM, who was in charge of the air war in Iraq, was approached. The CFACC's air control agencies, together with the Combat Air Operations Center (CAOC) and Air Support Operations Center (ASOC), provided air support in response to specific Marine requests.[58]

The Marines' perspective on using CAS was entirely different from the Air Force and the Army. The Marines' readiness to employ CAS in urban warfare boggled the minds of the pilots of National Guard F-16s, who were quick to notice the difference between the Marine and Army ground units. According to the pilots, the Army never gave them clearance to strike and the ASOC was tentative about calling them in. The Marines, on the other hand, were quick to

56 Allison, "Close Air Support."

57 Ibid.

58 United States Marine Corps Way of War combined-arms practices started in World War II and were further perfected in Korea and Vietnam.



request supporting air strikes. No delays were experienced when the Marine Direct Air Support center (DASC) was contacted, which was not the case when the Air Force or Army control system was involved. The other TacAir pilots soon joined in and flew CAS missions to support RCT-1. MAGTF had conditioned the ground forces for successful utilization of non-Marine air support.[59]

It is important to note that the Marines never bombed for effect. Each strike was instead delivered only after a quick analysis determined the air attack was the only means to handle the threat. Forward Air Controllers (FACs), air officers, and pilots went to great lengths to ensure the bombs and/or strafing

59 Ibid.

struck only the targets for which they were intended. The major task was to "integrate all the division fires, CAS, artillery, and mortars" in order to provide support for the ground unit's speedy penetrating attack plan. This plan would insure the quick securing of Fallujah as well as reject the media's "CNN-theater" effect to negatively influence the outcome of this Marine Corps effort.[60]

The Marines were given the command role in *Operation Phantom Fury/New Dawn* in order to avoid the traffic jams that naturally sprang up as a result of dual C2 set-ups. The CFACC dedicated its full attention to regions where the insurgent activities were most likely to spring up. The request for unity of command gave the I Marine Expeditionary Force a cylinder of space around Fallujah, which was designated a high-density airspace control zone (HiDACZ). This HiDACZ was 25,000 feet high around a 15-mile radius.[61]

A "push" fixed-wing CAS system was put into place together with a "pull" rotary wing element. TacAir would hover around the 5–15 mile orbit while the rotary wing CAS providers based in battle positions would respond only when the ground units put in a specific request for air assists. The CAS carried out missions between RCT-1 and RCT-7 in parallel, to which all the ground elements were attached. The success of the CAS also depended heavily on Marine Corps procedural control. This involved the presence of many aircraft in a confined space at a given time where the pilots were allowed to maneuver without much restriction. All they needed to do was stay within the limits already set. The Air Force regarded such a thing as a loss of control, but the Marines did not. Its employment led to the ultimate success of the CAS in this effort.[62]

The 1st MARDIV, also known as Task Force Blue Diamond, led this penetration with their tanks. The fact that M1A1 Abrams tanks weigh up to 70 tons did not deter their movement inside Fallujah. They rolled into the city, smashing through the barricades and running over fanatical insurgents suicidal and foolish enough to stand their ground. Behind them were four more Marine infantry battalions. Tanks with plows and rollers made their way through the minefields and brought down the barricades on the edge of the city. The

60 Mills, USMC IO, 16-17.

61 Allison, "Close Air Support." There was an additional inner circle, with a 5-mile radius, inside the 15-mile radius.

62 Ibid.

insurgents had optimistically planned to destroy the American tanks and claim an early win. The tanks, however, let loose with all the firepower they had available, and two-tank elements advanced farther into the city so that more mobile artillery could be brought to play.

The deep advance of the Coalition tanks left a gap between them and the reinforcing Marine tanks and Bradley Fighting Vehicles. When they realized this, the insurgents tried to slip behind the tanks and assault them from behind. When they did so, however, they were caught unaware by the Marine tanks rolling in to join the first two waves.

The advancing tanks spread out into the west of the city. Artillery fire pounded insurgent positions. The mass and the speed with which the Marines moved threw the insurgents into a state of panic and greatly diminished their fighting power. If the insurgents engaged the Marines or opened fire when the Marines came into view, the response was a rapid artillery and mortar fire that collapsed the building holding them. If they chose to remain in hiding and wait for the Marines to approach them before opening fire, 60mm mortar shells coupled with Marine .50 caliber and 7.62 mm machine guns smothered their positions and killed them.[63]

The experience of Major Doug Zembiec, who was killed in Fallujah, validated the intense level of combat in the city and also the doctrinal philosophy and ethos of the Marine Corps Way of War. The following is the Silver Star citation awarded to Major Zembiec— "The Lion of Fallujah":

Citation:

The President of the United States takes pride in presenting the Silver Star Medal (Posthumously) to Douglas A. Zembiec, Major, Marine Corps, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action against the enemy while serving as a Marine Advisor, Iraq Assistance Group, Multi-National Corps, Iraq, in support of *Operation Iraqi Freedom* on 11 May 2007. Attacking from concealed and fortified positions, an enemy force engaged Major Zembiec's assault team, firing crew-served automatic weapons and various small arms. He boldly moved forward and immediately directed the bulk of his assault team to take cover. Under withering enemy fire, Major Zembiec remained in an exposed, but tactically critical, position in order to provide leadership and direct effective suppressive fire on the enemy combatant positions with his assault

63 Bing West, *No True Glory: A Frontlines Account of the Battle for Fallujah* (New York: Bantam, 2005), 62-63.

team's machine gun. In doing so, he received the brunt of the enemy's fire, was struck and succumbed to his wounds. Emboldened by his actions his team and supporting assault force aggressively engaged the enemy combatants. Major Zembiec's quick thinking and timely action to re-orient his team's machine gun enabled the remaining members of his unit to rapidly and accurately engage the primary source of the enemy's fire, saving the lives of his comrades. By his bold initiative, undaunted courage, and complete dedication to duty, Major Zembiec reflected great credit upon himself and upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.

Prior to his posthumous award, Major Zembiec was also cited for a Bronze Star with Valor for the following action:

A Marine patrol was taking heavy fire, and Zembiec's unit was called in to lead a retaliatory assault. Right after arriving, Echo Company rushed toward the enemies, who launched a heavy volley of fire toward the new arrivals. Instead of directing from the back, Zembiec himself led the men toward the fire, determined to help the trapped patrol. His men moved to a roof to counter the insurgents who had been firing down from above. The enemies wasted no time and focused their AK-47- and RPG-fire on the Marines on the roof. The Marines tried to radio an Abrams tank to fire on the enemy, but the tank didn't respond. As they continued to call for assistance, Zembiec decided to take matters into his own hands. He raced down the stairs and directly into the line of fire, heading toward the tank. He climbed up to the hatch even as mortar rounds exploded nearby and bullets ricocheted off the metal. Unscathed, he told the tank operators where to fire. The tank made quick work of the enemy, and Zembiec ran back to the roof.

A few weeks later, insurgents opened fire on Zembiec's platoon from three sides, with thousands of rounds. Grenades flew back and forth between the enemy and his men with only 20 feet between them. Zembiec, wounded by shrapnel, moved to a better position to direct the counterattack. He then moved from house to house, encouraging and motivating his men and repositioning the outnumbered Marines. Even as the battle raged, Zembiec coordinated the evacuation of nine injured Marines.

Those insurgents who opted to wait until the Marines were on their doorstep were surrounded by warriors who would not leave until everyone in the house had been killed or captured. Any insurgents who did not care to die could surrender, but for the most part the Islamic insurgents were generously

given the opportunity to die for their beliefs, which most opted to willingly do.[64]

It took a hard week of fighting for the Marines and soldiers to reach the southern end of the city. The Marine 2nd Recon Battalion, alongside the 1st Cavalry Division's Blackjack Brigade, guarded the city to the south. The Marine Regimental Combat Teams beat down the enemy in the north and pushed them until they found themselves in the hands of Marines and soldiers waiting for them on the other side. The insurgents were surrounded by the joint forces in a classic "Hammer and Anvil" of the Marine Corps Way of War. The insurgents suffered huge losses that first week, but they were not completely defeated. A large number had found refuge in fortified buildings throughout Fallujah. It would take seven more grueling weeks for the Marines to completely clean out the city.

Operation Phantom Fury was the largest urban battle for the Marines since Vietnam's Battle for Hue City in 1968. The operation was a tremendous success and the city was finally free of insurgents. Moreover, the Iraqis' anti-occupation attitude had been transformed into a strong hatred for al-Qaeda in that region.

Before becoming the Corps' 34th Commandant, General James Conway led the I MEF in Iraq. "In Operation Iraqi Freedom on our way to Baghdad, we had 23 decision points," explained Gen. Conway, "and we felt that using Boyd, our OODA loop was so much faster than the enemy's that . . . Hey, you want to change the battlefield? Go ahead. We will out-think you, we will out-pace you, we will out-speed you in terms of our decisions and you won't stand a chance." He continued:

> In fact, what we found was that when we used deception, And we wanted to dangle a leg out there [as bait] for maybe 12 to 16 hours; we had to dangle it out there for a couple of days before they could digest and start to respond against something. So we could see that their decision cycle was so much slower than ours that we had to adjust, in some ways, to their rhythm if we were going to make our deceptions work and pick up the chatter on a radio and those types of things.
>
> But back to your basic question, I think—I said it in some ways earlier, but I think earlier there was resistance [to Maneuver Warfare] more than later when you look at the aggregate of what was being proposed, and you realize that some of it is not

64 Kelly, interview (supported by General Mattis) with the author.

terribly different, some of it is sufficiently different that we need to understand this kind of warfare.

General Conway also spoke on the subject of urban warfighting:

It was tough especially in Ramadi and Fallujah. I think it's fair to say the advantage goes over to the enemy in urban warfare by and large. They can pick and choose the timing. They can take advantage of lots of escape routes and narrow files where you can't bring all your power to bear; certainly it almost eliminates your ability for air support unless it's really truly precision weapons.

In the early going, the thing that made a difference for us were snipers. When we had the first fight in Fallujah, we got told to pull back and negotiate with the Iraqi leadership. [They] didn't want to do it and within three days we thought of taking the city and the bad guys were swimming, they were out of ammunition and it was essentially over.

It was a bad mistake to do it; it was a worse mistake to stop it in terms of Fallujah and it taught the whole nation, I think, a lesson in terms of how the hell you do this.

I remember when we pulled back and I met with these clowns for the first time, they said, "You must move your snipers." And I said, "Well, that's an interesting way to start the conversation. I've got tanks that have penetrated well down into your streets. "How about the tanks." "We don't care about the tanks but you must move your snipers." And only then did we come to realize that our snipers controlled the battlefield. As far as they could see they could control any guy in a black outfit with an AK. [They] dare not move across the street—as they tried to dash the first one killed, the second guy started to go and he gets killed, and the third guy.... He didn't have a chance either.

"There were some lessons learned," recalled General Conway. "It's tough to move around a city. You don't get a lot of maneuver warfare working for you but we learned some things." The general continued:

Historically there had been the belief that tanks are vulnerable to combat in the built up area. [Marine Corps] tanks were the prime mover in the built up areas. Where you had a house that maybe had 18 bad guys in it and all the avenues were mined and covered, the tank would just blow the hell out of the thing and move on. You had to protect them [the tanks]. You couldn't let them get too far out in front of the infantry, but protected, that this sort of armored pillbox was impervious to just about anything the bad guy could throw at them was huge. I think we probably learned that lesson initially in

> Najaf. Someone said that we learned it as early as Nasiriya on the way up, but after a time and certainly in the second battle of Fallujah, tanks were invaluable to us as we went through. And the tank is still the gold standard in the Middle East. Everybody respects a tank. Tanks are, I think, absolutely essential. They give you this opportunity for maneuver warfare and it's a good piece of kit.
>
> We [the Marine Corps] might use them differently. The Army would amass tanks and go mano a mano through the Republican Guard. We'd be hard pressed to do that. We're much better using it the way the French intended when they got attacked by the Germans; that's disseminating the tanks amongst the infantry and using it. It must be said though that Marines are capable of doing anything with them. The firepower of these modern tanks is really incredible. And so you combine tanks with Cobras and you got a powerful package. You can take on a lot of stuff and do damage with that. I think tanks are absolutely essential. I've always believed that. Nothing has changed that thinking.[65]

Perhaps the best way to sum up *Operation Enduring Freedom* (OEF)—the official name for the Global War on Terrorism between 2001 and 2014—and *Operation Iraqi Freedom* (OIF)—the 2003 invasion of Iraq—is to observe that the most important tool regarding the Marine Corps Way of War is the maneuver doctrinal philosophy of General Gray and others. It can be applied to both the traditional/conventional battlefield and urban warfare leading into 4th and 5th generation irregular applications. Maneuver warfare is effective when applied to urban warfare as long as there is good mastery of the urban architecture and proper planning. Maneuver warfare is essential when your ground force is small in number. Speed is also essential to the success of maneuver warfare. It throws the opposing enemy into shock and makes them resort to actions that are defensively detrimental to their objectives. A good number of insurgent leaders later admitted to making the wrong decisions when the Marines advanced much more quickly than they expected.

General Mattis offered his thoughts on how we gained control of Fallujah:

> *Q: Vigilant Resolve proved to be something of a disaster. Correct me if I'm wrong, but didn't it necessitate the second battle of Fallujah?*

65 Conway, interview with the author.

A:Well, I think the enemy had something to do with necessitating the second battle of Fallujah as well. We were trying to roll back the cycle of violence but by the time we'd arrived there, the momentum was carrying it forward and so we had to play the ball where it lay. We at the same time continued right through the worst fighting in Fallujah and Ramadi. I would come back every night to my CP and oftentimes have sheiks there. I'd have them over for dinner; I knew they were fighting me. They were sending their boys to fight me. And we just kept telling them, "You're lining up with the wrong folks." So what we had to do was get through the mud, the blood, and the beer but we never lost sight of the fact that we would turn al Anbar against al Qaida. It certainly threw us off track in terms of what we had desired for the timeline, but war is one improvisation after another, one darn thing after another.

We still had out in the western Euphrates River Valley a young Army major, Special Forces guy, working with the Abu Neemer tribe. And if you use the cancer model, we were infecting the enemy with that cancer and it just kept happening over the years and it's rotated in and out. A lot of people took credit for it when it finally happened, but in fact it started in the spring of 2004 with a young Army major named Adam Souk. But I would just say it was just normal adaptations to the enemy situation. As maneuver warfare teaches you, you're up against an enemy with an independent will. So your plan is nothing more than Hagel's dialectic. You have a thesis. The enemy countered for something so you have an antithesis. Out of that you come up with a new synthesis. And all that really is, is your new thesis and you just keep playing the ball forward in the give and take and the heave and ho of warfare.

Q: Sounds like John Boyd's OODA Cycling Loop in disguise.

A: Well, Boyd's thinking is very, very prevalent in the Marine Corps, but you're absolutely right.[66]

Maneuver warfare (as interpreted by Gray, Wyly, Boyd, and all the way back to Sun Tzu) as the Marine Corps' *modus operandi* proved essential in past wars just as it does in contemporary combat efforts.

66 Mattis, telephone interview with the author.

Chapter 9

Conclusions

A Revolution in Military Affairs?

"For a major Revolution in Military Affairs to have occurred," observed Sir Michael Howard, "there must have taken place a military turning point in the history of mankind." Under this strict definition, the Marine Corps did not experience a RMA in its adoption of maneuver warfare philosophy during the Gray Commandancy.[1]

The introduction of the equestrian spur that would enable the use of heavy cavalry was certainly one development of this magnitude, as was the introduction of the compound bow, gunpowder, the rifled musket, the use of electronic communications equipment, the introduction of mechanized armored vehicles, the development of airpower as an element of combined arms set the standard for inclusion into the RMA pantheon. There are, of course, others that could be added to this list.

From its inception to its status today as a major worldwide military force, the Marine Corps has (officially and unofficially) practiced maneuver-type warfare. In the recent past the concepts institutionalized by the Corps can be

1 Geoffrey Parker, *The Military Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500-1800* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 1-5.

traced in part to its roots (doctrinal military philosophy, or DNA) including adherence to what has been termed a "German Way of War."[2]

Initially during the Marine Corps' "evolution," *Bewegungskrieg* (maneuver warfare) tactics did not sit well within the hierarchy of the Corps' senior leadership, officers and noncommissioned officers alike. Initially, the influence of the "maneuverists" was not viewed positively because it was seen as trying to alter the fighting traditions of the Marines. One of the proponents of the use of modern German maneuver warfare tactics, Bill Lind, managed to alienate a large part of the Marine Corps warrior population. Still, inroads were made that eventually led to the institutionalization of this philosophy within the current Corps.[3]

This change, however, was much more of an evolution than a revolution. Some have even referred to it as a "renaissance." In either case (revolution or rebirth), these definitions do not accurately capture the true picture of a Marine Corps Way of War. The ethos and military ethic that is part and parcel of the Corps managed to unify ad hoc ways of warfighting in both its conventional attritional doctrine and in its non-conventional maneuver warfare.

The prime mover of this concept, General Al Gray, observed that "maneuver warfare is not new per se."[4] Lieutenant General Bernard Trainor observed that in adopting and/or adapting the philosophy of maneuver warfare, the Marine Corps was returning to its roots in warfighting learned during the "Banana Wars" but shelved during World War II, Korea, and, to some extent, Vietnam. The reemergence of this concept under General Gray was a reflection of the Marines' experience in Vietnam and the demoralizing effect of Beirut and its aftermath.[5]

The term that was bandied about in the press during this timeframe was "Reformer(s)."[6] This was and remains a misnomer because it was eventually applied to those within the Marine Corps seeking serious revisions to how the Corps would fight future battles. General John Kelly set the "Reformer" name aside and argued that the correct terms are, and should have been, "maneuverist," and for those opposed to the concept of maneuver warfare,

2 Lind, *Maneuver Warfare,* 116-118, and, Citino, "*German Way of War,*" 306-312.

3 Bill Lind, interview with the author.

4 Gray, interview with the author.

5 Trainor email correspondence with the author.

6 Walter, Isaacson, "The Winds of Reform," *Time Magazine* (March 7, 1983).

"traditionalists." It is now readily apparent that the gap in understanding has been considerably narrowed within the Marine Corps family thanks to General Kelly's terminology.[7]

The history of the Marine Corps is replete with examples of maneuver warfare. It existed during the attacks at Trenton and Princeton during a bleak time during the early years of the American Revolution, and in the successful amphibious landing at Nassau, Bahamas, during the same conflict. It was practiced by Lieutenant Presley N. O'Bannon during his attack on Tripoli in North Africa during the Barbary Wars, and in the Marine amphibious landings during the Spanish-American War at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, in 1898. It has also been suggested that Marine efforts at Belleau Wood had a maneuverist element because the NCOs in the wheat fields were using mission-type orders. Major "Pete" Ellis and then-Lieutenant Victor "Brute" Krulak helped to perfect amphibious landings—the bread and butter of the Marines in the Pacific Campaign in World War II. The concept was also evident in the breakout from the Chosin Reservoir by the Marines during the Korean War and again in the battle of Hue City in Vietnam. Each of these witnessed the Marine Corps' application of maneuver warfare. Maneuver warfare was again in evidence in Grenada, the Gulf War, Somalia, OEF, and OIF. It is a day-in and day-out fact of life in the Marine Corps.

"In its own way," concludes General Mattis, "the Marine Corps had always allowed a great deal of freedom to tactical commanders, but at least now we had a better framework for what we were doing and it was maneuver warfare's tenets. And so actually it was more of an upgrading of tactical proficiency and operational art. It was not really replacing something."[8]

Prime Movers

Colonel of Marines Michael D. Wyly

The doctrinalization of maneuver warfare as it occurred within the Marine Corps would not have happened without Colonel Mike Wyly's efforts in response to his experiences in Vietnam. The other prime mover, as noted

7 Kelly, interview with the author. General Conway offered the term "attritionist" in his interview.

8 Mattis, In-person interview with the author.

throughout this study, was General Gray, the eventual 29th Commandant of the Corps. The Marine Corps Way of War only exists as we know it today because of these two Marine officers, both of whom possessed the vision and the determination to make it happen.

Mike Wyly lost one of his two best lieutenants, Chip Pilkington, in a firefight in the An Hoa Basin. The death of this young and promising Marine officer deeply bothered Wyly, who vowed then and there that he would find a better way for the Marine Corps to fight its wars.

"A unique feature of my personal story is that that I became personally dedicated to making change in our Corps years before I met John Boyd," explained Colonel Wyly, who added the following:

> After two tours in Vietnam I made a pledge to myself that were I to remain in the Marine Corps, I would commit myself to making us as powerful a fighting force as I could, not just for the strength of our nation, but for the sake of the wonderful young combat Marines I had come to know and who had given so much, and for the sake of their successors, who would serve our country in the next war.
>
> The next war, I presumed, would be waged against the Soviet Union. I did not rule out more wars "by proxy", such as the North Vietnamese fought for their Soviet supporters. In either scenario, significant reform was imperative.
>
> When I made the decision to dedicate the rest of my career to change and reform, I had to come to terms with the fact that doing so might well stifle or end my career. I was a Marine major, "fresh caught," and it was 1973. I would sustain my career as long as possible for the greater good of our Corps; however, I had to be ready to hang it up as a Marine Corps major if the demands of my commitment were to lead to that.[9]

29th Commandant of the Marine Corps A. M. Gray

Al Gray, the "mustang" Marine, was responsible for endorsing this process within the Marine Corps, from the II MEF level up to the Commandancy. General Gray was pulled into all this by Colonel Wyly's plan to "ambush him" at the Officers Club at Camp Lejeune. Unbeknownst to Wyly, however, General Gray was already on board before the "ambush." As he soon

9 Wyly, email exchange and interview with the author.

discovered, Gray had also been seeking meaningful doctrinal change along the same lines as Wyly.[10]

Wyly had sent Captain Bill Woods to Camp Lejeune to lead the ambush, accompanied by Captain G. I. Wilson, one of Woods' classmates from his time at the Basic School. These two junior officers get General Gray's attention and Marine Corps maneuver warfare acquired a protector, contributor, and future benefactor. Mike Wyly was also responsible for introducing General Gray to Jim Webb, who as Secretary of the Navy would eventually push through the promotion of General Gray to the commandancy of the Marine Corps. It was at this juncture that Gray institutionalized maneuver warfare—or the "fighting smarter" philosophy—by issuing the FMFM-1 Warfighting manual and by creating the Marine Corps University. Colonel Wyly wrote the syllabi and curricula instilling maneuver warfare and the Boyd OODA philosophy into the courses offered by the new University—and thus into the Corps' bloodstream.[11]

The Other Movers

Jim Webb (USMC): The other young Marine lieutenant of note in Wyly's company in Vietnam was Jim Webb. To this day Wyly and Webb remain close friends. After his time in Vietnam, Webb became a successful writer, Secretary of the Navy, and Democratic senator from Virginia and presidential contender. He is also the recipient of the Navy Cross for his service in Vietnam—the nation's second highest award for valor in combat—and the recipient of two Silver Stars.[12] As his company commander, Wyly also nominated Webb for the

10 Wyly Wilson and Woods interview with the author.

11 Trainor, Telephonic interview with the author.

12 The Navy Cross citations are included to illustrate that Jim Webb had the credentials to discern what a "warrior" was. Webb was clear General Al Gray was that warrior leader needed to bring the Marine Corps into its future. **Webb Citation**: "The Navy Cross is presented to James H. Webb, Jr., First Lieutenant, Marine Corps, for extraordinary heroism while serving as a Platoon Commander with Company D, First Battalion, Fifth Marines, First Marine Division (Reinforced), Fleet Marine Force, in connection with combat operations against the enemy in the Republic of Vietnam. On 10 July 1969, while participating in a company-sized search and destroy operation deep in hostile territory, First Lieutenant Webb's platoon discovered a well-camouflaged bunker complex which appeared to be unoccupied. Deploying his men into defensive positions, First Lieutenant Webb was advancing to the first bunker when three enemy soldiers armed with hand

Medal of Honor. Wyly shared his vision with this like-minded *protégé* on numerous occasions. Webb would eventually provide the bureaucratic gravitas to restructure the leadership of the Marine Corps (and to shake off the negative stigma of Vietnam and Beirut) by seeking a "warrior type" Marine to be the 29th Commandant. As noted above, General Al Gray was Jim Webb's choice.

Lieutenant General Bernard Trainor (USMC): Bernard Trainor was responsible for appointing Wyly to the faculty of the Marine Corps University hierarchy, where he eventually introduced maneuver warfare into the curriculum. General Trainor, however, was already aware of Wyly's value to Marine Corps' educational systems. "When I was at the Ed. Ctr.," explained General Trainor, "I sought to have the faculties at Command & Staff College (CSC) and Amphibious Warfighting School (AWS) broaden the students' minds by having them think outside the box." He continued:

> However, I was mindful that my job was to educate the students in the nitty gritty of their profession as Marines. This was particularly needed at AWS.
>
> At CSC I emphasized command responsibility, the importance of clear commander's guidance and then of letting subordinates get on with the job. Inherent in the teaching was adaptability and initiative at all levels of command. It came out of my studies of WWII battles where troops would end up in the wrong place with no comm to higher command. Some troop leaders handled it well. Many were left floundering for direction.

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grenades jumped out. Reacting instantly, he grabbed the closest man and, brandishing his .45 caliber pistol at the others, apprehended all three of the soldiers. Accompanied by one of his men, he then approached the second bunker and called for the enemy to surrender. When the hostile soldiers failed to answer him and threw a grenade which detonated dangerously close to him, First Lieutenant Webb detonated a claymore mine in the bunker aperture, accounting for two enemy casualties and disclosing the entrance to a tunnel. Despite the smoke and debris from the explosion and the possibility of enemy soldiers hiding in the tunnel, he then conducted a thorough search which yielded several items of equipment and numerous documents containing valuable intelligence data. Continuing the assault, he approached a third bunker and was preparing to fire into it when the enemy threw another grenade. Observing the grenade land dangerously close to his companion, First Lieutenant Webb simultaneously fired his weapon at the enemy, pushed the Marine away from the grenade, and shielded him from the explosion with his own body. Although sustaining painful fragmentation wounds from the explosion, he managed to throw a grenade into the aperture and completely destroy the remaining bunker. By his courage, aggressive leadership, and selfless devotion to duty, First Lieutenant Webb upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and of the United States Naval Service."

> Mike Wyly and his Socratic pedagogy, was a breath of fresh air on the faculty of AWS. I became (and remained) his ardent supporter. I encouraged his innovative thinking at AWS and his unique understanding of mission orders and subordinate freedom of action. I tried to shield him thereafter from those who were critical of his independent mind.[13]

Without General Trainor's behind-the-scenes efforts, Colonel Wyly would not have had the protection in place to further his endeavors on behalf of maneuver warfare.

William Lind: Bill Lind was essentially a political player who insinuated himself into the process by courting Wyly. Lind's bona fides were his Ivy League education with an emphasis on German history, and the gravitas of two senatorial staff positions during the post-Vietnam military reorganization period.

Below is an excerpt from an insightful interview conducted with Lind that included a discussion of his motivation for entering into this process:[14]

> BL: Yes, It starts with Senator Robert Taft, Jr. in Ohio.
>
> TP: Why did he get into it?
>
> BL: Basically I led him into it. Taft understood that the job of the [Armed Services] Committee was to look at the governance of the country, take an independent look at what the services were doing and whether it made sense.... Not just about are we wasting money, not just about getting contracts for the state [Ohio] and your district, but independently looking at it and saying does this make sense for the military or is the military missing something? And that starts with Taft.
>
> TP: Well does it start with you who convinced Taft?
>
> BL: Right. Essentially the point is that Taft is open to it . . . and then Gary Hart was on the Committee for 2 years 1974–76 with Taft, and when Taft was defeated, Hart,

13 Trainor, email correspondence with the author.

14 Lind, interview with the author.

knowing I was politically conservative asked me to come with him to continue the work . . . to the point where we put out a second edition of the Taft White Paper as a Taft/Hart paper; and then eventually by the late 1970s Gary Hart and a few other members of Congress were giving speeches on the [Senate] floor talking about maneuver warfare doctrine . . . and that's important in terms of the Marine Corps' interest in it because of the Marines' sensitivity to the Hill.

Hart was genuinely interested in new ideas and he was interested in governing the country. So Hart/Taft both were people who were actually interested in governance but there was a political calculation as well. Politically the country was moving to the right, particularly in military stuff at this point. The Cold War was still very much under way and Hart was looking for a third way where he can be pro-military without sounding like John Tower. He was looking for a third way, through military reform, between the Kennedy liberal anti-defense people and John Tower's "give the Pentagon anything they want" people. So there was a political calculus in that for him as well.

TP: By 1976 you have gotten maneuver warfare on the front burner?

BL: Yes.

TP: Do you personally think it is more effective as a fighting tool in terms of carnage, in terms of wounded in action?

BL: What, maneuver warfare? Oh yeah! Obviously, yes, it enormously lowers casualties. The Panzer divisions of WWII changed the operational mobility differential but the point is it brings men to it quickly; it isn't an endless, bottomless bloodbath that was always one of my motivations for preferring maneuver warfare to attrition warfare [which] always struck me as morally appalling. Also what you have is a marriage of people looking for something different after Vietnam, with me being able to point out there is a different model which they were not aware of because the German military lost their war. It's not just different tactically as fighting power will point out, it is different in everything, it's a different military culture. It's worked extremely well.

Colonel John Boyd USAF (Ret.): John Boyd was the other non-Marine who entered into the intellectual and philosophical heart and soul of this remarkable evolutionary process. The colonel was a maverick within the

Defense Department whose primary aim was to "reform the military and its spending."[15]

Boyd eventually found his way to the Marine Corps as it was going through the post-Vietnam adjustments of downsizing while reviewing its *raison d'etre* of being the Force-in-Readiness for the United States. Boyd brought Wyly into his ranks while he was teaching young Marine officers the intricacies of *OODA Loop: Patterns of Conflict* and his *Discourse on Winning and Losing* as they applied to maneuver warfare philosophy. Boyd was also a student of Asian military philosophy.[16]

Wyly recalled introducing him to General Gray, who took an immediate liking to Boyd and his military philosophy. When he died in 1997, more than 300 Marines attended his burial, each placing his Marine Corps' iconic Eagle Globe and Anchor (EGA) on Boyd's coffin as an acknowledgment of thanks and a tribute for all he had done for their military education.[17]

The Apostles: The young captains and majors who laid the pipe and carried the workload for this evolution include G. I. Wilson, Bill Woods, John Schmidt and Bruce Gudmundsson. These men were the writers and planners who put pen to paper. They ALSO put together the Gray *Maneuver Warfare Handbook* and then-Captain John Schmidt wrote FMFM-1 *Warfighting*.[18]

The Practitioners: Some, but not all, of the Marines who successfully employed maneuver warfare as a Marine Corps Way of War include: Major General Ray Smith, General James Conway, General Jim Jones, General Charles Krulak, General James Mattis, General Tony Zinni, General John Kelly, General Joe Dunford, Major General Mike Myatt, and Lieutenant General Bill Keys.

With the exception of this last group, the movers and shakers first known as "maneuverists" are all directly connected to Mike Wyly or Al Gray in a significant and meaningful way. It was Wyly who brought them all together in various developmental stages to devise a better way to fight wars on behalf of

15 "Reformers," *Time Magazine,* 1983.

16 Coram, *Boyd*, 445.

17 See OODA Chart, 262. The OODA Loop Chart is reproduced at the end of this chapter.

18 Wilson, files shared with the author; Schmidt, email to the author. Gray's publication remains unpublished, but was privately distributed to the rest of these adherents.

our nation and the Marine Corps. It was Al Gray who gave them high cover and the support of senior rank. None of the members of this famous (or "infamous") evolutionary group could have individually knit the doctrine together to get the same results we see today on the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Good luck is required for every endeavor in life, but it was primarily the independent vision of both Gray and Wyly that formulated the real touchstones of this development. Each took those "opportunities to meet each other's preparation." And they both created the space for an idea whose time had come—the furthering of the Marine Corps' evolution of the doctrine of maneuver warfare. A return to the ethic and ethos of the Marine Corps DNA and its storied history remains their proud accomplishment.

The use of a wagon wheel is a good way to visualize this development. If we place Mike Wyly and Al Gray at the hub, then each spoke represents the other individuals mentioned above. If there is a "father' of a Marine Corps Way of War, the honors belongs to General Al Gray and Colonel of Marines Mike Wyly.[19]

Abandonment of an American Way of War

For all intents and purposes in a broader sense Marine Corps attritional warfare is over. The continued use and development of fighting smarter techniques garnered from the Corps University's schools allows Marines to take full advantage of options regarding strategy and tactics. Attrition, therefore, is still a possible choice of action, if required. This fact was made clear by General James Conway, the 34th Commandant of the Marine Corps: "I want all my options open going into battle and if need be attrition is an option." Conway's observation was amplified by General James Amos, the 35th CMC, in November 2011 at Camp Lawton, Herat, Afghanistan, when he stated: "While the Marines are willing and able to operate from dug-in positions [attritional defensive–offensive doctrine], they are uniquely equipped and trained to do much more."[20]

19 See "The Wyly Wheel" at the ends of this chapter.

20 Conway, interview with the author; Robert Burns, "Postwar Marines: Smaller, Less Focused On Land War," *Boston Globe on Line,* December 5, 2011, www.boston.com/news/nation/articles/2011/12/05/postwar_marines_smaller_less_focused_on_land_war/, accessed May 27, 2014.

The schools within the Marine Corps are exposing young officers to programs that are not just rote memorization of facts. Bruce Gudmundsson currently teaches the Harvard case method approach that develops the skills for critical decision-making at The Basic School and the Marine Corps University. These cases prepare Marines to assume leadership qualities that are part and parcel of the decentralized command needed in the practice of maneuver warfare.

Why the Marine Corps was able to Doctrinalize Maneuver Warfare

The Marine Corps as an organization has some characteristics that militate in favor of its ability to make changes when change is needed. The basic advantages General Gray enjoyed pre-existing in the Corps were as follows:

— A common cause and sense of mission in which all Marines strongly believe;
— The instinct for physical survival, together with the likelihood of being faced with possible death;
— All Marines have common training which gives them common reference points and common language;
– The *Esprit de Corps* that binds Marines together and motivates them to work together;
— Our first identity as Marines is to be a Marine;
— Every Marine has to be qualified as a rifleman. Every Marine is a warfighter;
— Marines are more passionate about their traditions than any other branch of the service;
— Marines carry a sense responsibility for the Marines who came before them;
— Marines make the most detailed and specifically significant demands on our Marines in terms of iron disciple and precise standards;
— Marines have a reputation for innovation;
— Marines are extremely flexible;

— Marines are, by nature, expeditionary.[21]

This was the legacy that Commandant Gray parlayed to institutionalize the maneuver warfare philosophy within the Corps. Without this institutional buy-in by a rather small force, there would have been no chance to develop change.

"I'm rather a student of history—I saw the logic to it, it made sense to me," explained General Mattis, who went on to explain his support for the overall acceptance of the institutionalization of maneuver warfare within the Corps:

> People like Tony Zinni who at the time was a regimental commander, and Van Riper—everywhere I went I ran into people above me who were strong advocates. And among the younger officers it was easy to embrace. The changes weren't that severe because in its way the Marine Corps had always allowed a great deal of freedom to tactical commanders but at least now we had a better framework for what we were doing and it was maneuver warfare's tenets. And so actually it was more of an upgrading of tactical proficiency and operational art. It was not really replacing something. It was almost like you'd come out of high school and now you were going to college, if you know what I mean. [22]

General Bernard Trainor offered his considered opinion on this topic. "The Marine Corps was not hostile to the ideas behind Maneuver Warfare and Boyd's concepts," began the general. "Bill Lind was the source of friction. He publicly criticized Marine leadership and ascribed to it a calcified commitment to attrition warfare where it did not exist to the degree he claimed." General Trainor continued at length:

> The Marine Corps had a well-deserved reputation for innovative thinking and took umbrage at Bill Lind's charges. Matters were exacerbated when he consciously or unconsciously undercut the leadership by encouraging company-grade officers to become "Young Turks." Resentment to Lind and his works was the unintended consequence.

21 Clancy and Zinni, *Battle Ready*, 142-143.

22 Mattis, telephone interview with the author.

"As a Marine, I deplored Lind's deportment," continued General Trainor. "As for his concepts, I welcomed the free thought and debate his advocacy brought to the table as refreshing and healthy." General Trainor "applauded the critical thinking aspect of Maneuver Warfare; the freedom of thought that it engendered and the greater freedom of action for subordinates under mission orders that it embraced. But I considered his [Lind's] Maneuver Warfare a sub-set of war fighting options whose essence was already resident within Marine concepts of warfare."

General Trainor continued:

> This was minus a key element: There was so much attention to Boyd's getting inside the enemy's OODA loop that little attention was being paid to killing him. It could be interpreted that, over time, the term "Maneuver Warfare" took on mystical proportions. This I found potentially dangerous if it was to become the keystone of the way to fight. To me, Maneuver Warfare was heavily influenced by Jomini's "scientific art" of warfare with its decisive battle philosophy and by its subsequent German army derivative. I believed the Boyd-Lind concept was maneuvering the enemy into defeat without the Jomini and German "decisive battle."
>
> A point I made to Bill Lind from the sidelines years ago was that you can't maneuver an enemy into defeat. At some point he has to be actually beaten—and concede. (I make the same argument to victory-through-airpower advocates.) My basic problem was that Maneuver Warfare was a prescriptive formula based on the assumption that attack was the only way to go; the enemy was of an equal genre to self; the object of an engagement was the complete capitulation of the enemy; and the environment, terrain, etc. were incidental. But I held then and hold now that wars are largely *sui generis* and don't fit such a constant mold.
>
> Paradoxically it calls for subordinate freedom of action within a framework of dogma. It turned out that Desert Storm did fit the mold, but even without Maneuver Warfare, the USA/USMC operational plans would have been what they were, but were credited as examples of maneuver warfare. I fought in Korea as a rifle platoon leader and upon reflection can state with confidence that Maneuver Warfare would have had no place during the Outpost War phase of the Korean War short of another Inchon-style landing. The enemy had too much defense-in-depth.
>
> I commanded two battalions on Vietnam tours, and Maneuver Warfare would not have worked there either. . . . Iraqi Freedom I (OIF), started out as Maneuver Warfare at its

best, but came a cropper early when the enemy did not turn out to be the Republican Guard, but the Fedayeen on our flanks. The following eight years of Iraqi Freedom II saw no Maneuver Warfare option and became a war of attrition, so detested by Bill Lind.

The German model of Maneuver Warfare in World War II was also found wanting because of its essentially narrow application to offensive action against peer enemy on accommodating terrain. The Germans were at a loss when offense failed them and they had to revert to the defense. Even then they held to their doctrine in the form of the counter-offensive, e.g. Kursk, Caen, the Ardennes, and Tunisia. In all cases they failed. Kesselring, fighting in Italy, had the good sense to fight a war of attrition after his counterstrike failed at Salerno.

The totem of Maneuver Warfare is alive in the Marine Corps, but hopefully with a far more mature understanding of the principles that it should have embodied. We have legions of officers who have seen the elephant, are battle-wise, and realize there is no magic recipe. Fighting and success in battle involves myriad non-military factors.

"I think today's Marine culture has at least benefited and internalized Lind's mantra of mission orders," concluded General Trainor, "and has incorporated the best of Maneuver Warfare in two words: adapt and innovate."

Colonel Boyd's Forward-looking Advice

John Boyd's guidance to General Al Gray's query of "What's next?" sets the tone for the future of Marine Corps Way of War. His response was simple: "This is just the beginning!" Because of Boyd's death in early 1997, any continued criticism from Lind and others about how the Marine Corps furthers its evolution is unfounded and somewhat anti-Boyd in its spirit and nature.

John Boyd would be the first to acknowledge that the philosophical basis of the evolution will always be ongoing and developmental. It is just like the *OODA Loop's* orientation process. It is as dynamic and as fluid as any of the situations it may come up against in any of the battlespaces. It is a dynamic, free-thinking experience, not a static doctrine.

It is more than apparent the Marine Corps has not abandoned its progress where maneuver warfare is concerned. It has adapted it into its ongoing dynamic yet agile operational dynamism. Critics of the Marine Corps Way of War have not given the institution due justice for its flexibility.

We can only speculate on how John Boyd would further the development of his dynamic philosophy. Based upon the OODA Loop Cycling Process, Boyd likely would have joined Commandant Conway and Generals Kelly, Dunford, and Mattis and continued the evolution based upon the Marine Corps' DNA born at Princeton, New Jersey, in 1777, that is still evolving today in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, and other battlespaces of the future.

Afterword

Colonel Wyly's Historical Perspective

In March of 2015 I returned to Quantico, 24 years after retirement. I did so on invitation ostensibly to be Guest of Honor and Featured Speaker at a "Mess Night," the formal full dress dinner that is a Marine Corps tradition, this one for the second lieutenants who would be graduating from Quantico's Basic School, where they are prepared for their first assignment as commissioned officers. But my invitation included more than the dinner and a speech. I spent two days previous to the dinner being shown around the school, sitting in on classes on tactics, engaging in open discussion with the captains who were the faculty, as well as the second lieutenants who were students.

Never in my life had I felt more rewarded. Instead of listening to long lectures, the lieutenants assembled in conference groups of ten or twelve, poring over maps or sand tables, making decisions in constructive and hypothetical battle scenarios, and receiving critiques from combat-veteran instructors, all in open discussion. Original thought was commended. There was no "book solution." They were exercising their minds. And their thinking was that of maneuver warfare, the *way-of-thinking* so many of us had worked so hard to encourage and instill in my three tours of duty, on the staff of our Quantico schools.

Everything had changed—for the better—intellectually and physically. New buildings had been built with conference rooms and sand-table rooms. There was an air of dignity and purpose that inspired me.

More important was that the young captains who were doing the teaching, as I talked to and got to know them informally, projected not a sense of *"We were there—we've done it,"* but rather a drive and motivation to do it better, to seek more insights, study more history, and prepare for the next time they would be called upon to lead Marines in combat.

When I first left Quantico on the last day of the 35 years I spent in uniform, including my enlisted time and four years at the Naval Academy, I did so with a combination of hope and serious concern. It was the summer of 1991 and our current Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Alfred M. Gray, had been a steadfast advocate of modernizing and making relevant our tactics. He had overcome resistance from those who wanted to hold fast to set-piece doctrine and top-down command as opposed to independent decision-making down to the lowest small-unit levels. Trust was the binding factor, from top commander to lowest squad leader.

The reforms had begun in earnest in 1979, while the Soviet Union loomed as the major prospective adversary. "Fight outnumbered and win" was the slogan for the challenge that then faced us. German officers who had fought the Russians in World War II were among key witnesses who we interviewed and studied.

All this had faded from relevance with the dismemberment of the old Soviet Union; but the call to arms had come yet again—a far less formidable enemy, the Iraqi Army in Kuwait. Yet still, failure was not an option and Marines led the way into Kuwait, driving out the Iraqi forces handily, and bolstering confidence in our new tactics.

What, who, and when would be the next challenge, as always for the professional guardians of our American culture, no one could know with certainty.

Twenty-four years later, when I finished my speech at the Mess Night in Quantico, addressing 120 newly commissioned Marine lieutenants, my closing line was, "*The enemies of this country need to be afraid.*"

And I meant it!

Military operations in the Middle East have proven less than productive but not because of head-to-head battle tactics of the sort we postulated in our studies. Instead, shortcomings were the results of flawed policy decisions, and in many cases, lack of political resolve. Turned loose to fight force on force,

there is every reason to believe that our side then and now stood ready, and stand ready, certain to win.

It is for the military professional to be ready, to study his profession every day, and to adjust and change as technology changes, as concepts of war, friends and enemy, change; and as the world situation changes.

Every indication is that decision-making and action at the lowest levels—as we postulated in our reforms through the 1980s and '90s—will continue to be "what's needed." But we *must* keep our minds open and our eyes out, in order to see the way.

I had commanded a rifle company in Vietnam. That was before my efforts to change tactical thinking began. Most of the officers who worked with me in conceptualizing maneuver warfare were younger and had not witnessed Vietnam. All of us who served on active duty post-Vietnam in the 1970s and 1980s, while we worked, practiced, deployed, studied, wrote, and planned, served in an era of peace. We were spirited and ready. We called it "Peace through Strength." Our intelligence arm focused on the Soviet Union and theirs focused on us.

As I write today, I hear concerns aplenty from Marines returning from combat in Iraq and Afghanistan. Some long for a return to the ferment of the 1980s. In the minds of some, rigidity, set-piece tactics, top-down command, and the stifled prerogative allowed junior grade officers have all set in again. Fresh thinking is called for, they contend. And this is how it *should* be! No revolution sustains itself indefinitely. Old fights must be re-fought and won again. This is as true of the art of war as it is of the founding principles of the United States. After all, a fight for change is often a fight against human nature. In the case of what we did in the Corps in the '80s, it was often a fight against the natural propensity for those in authority to wield power and control, or, for those less sure of themselves to have set-piece rules to follow.

The face of war will continue to change, decade after decade, century after century, war after war. No two wars are the same. Yet, in the course of the work that we did through the '80s, making ready for the war with the Soviets that, happily, never came, we developed a useful language that I have already found applicable as I study 21st-century terrorism, seeking ways to defeat a very different enemy than the fast-moving armored and motorized units that were the "Soviet Threat" in the 1980s.

"Surfaces and Gaps" (seeking the weak spots and bypassing enemy strength), *"Multiple Thrusts"* (creating a picture of ambiguity for the enemy), *"Focus of Effort"* (employing maximum resources in one of the Multiple

Thrusts, known only to me and not the enemy), *"Mission Orders and Commander's Intent"* (making clear to subordinates the end-state desired so that independent decisions at the lowest levels can enhance speed and situational relevance)—these, and many more of the several concepts originated for conventional "force on force" warfare have their clear counterparts in a multitude of other forms of fighting.

So, while it was the "Soviet Threat" for the defeat of which we conceptualized so-called "maneuver warfare," we learned a vocabulary more broadly applicable. For instance, *"Surfaces and Gaps"* in conventional war would connote strongly defended areas to be bypassed vs. weak spots where infantry can break through, while in counter-terrorism it might be the difference between dissidents shielding themselves with civilians (surfaces) and dissidents isolated, alone, and vulnerable (gaps).

And yet there is much more. Much that we cannot conceive until the next evolution in war occurs. The professional warrior's imperative is to be ever-vigilant, looking for that evolution. More than all else, it is that spirit of professionals, of intellectual curiosity, and of drive and energy to seek out, find, and convince our comrades-in-arms, senior as well as junior, that the status quo can always be questioned, changed, and made relevant.

Fighting for change, having the courage of conviction, working the long hours in study, conceptualizing, and training, offers no reward in terms of promotion, respect, popularity, medals, or recognition from seniors. The reward is found elsewhere: in the future freedom of generations to come. It is that for which we fight. And it is the sole reward.

Semper Fidelis,

Col. Michael D. Wyly, USMC (Ret.)

Postscript

Since I began this work, the world in general and military history in particular, have seen major paradigm shifts in how warfare is prosecuted. The thrust of this work has been on the evolution within the Marine Corps toward maneuver warfare in the post-Vietnam era, given the array of new global challenges that have appeared. The proponents of this evolution both inside and outside the Corps laid a groundwork based upon the prior history of an organization committed to providing force projection on many different levels and in many different places of conflict and need. This development could only have been achieved within the Marine Corps, as no other American service branch had the internal history (DNA, if you will) to evolve into this philosophy of how to "fight smarter."

The work of General Al Gray and other Marines during what is termed the "Al Gray Renaissance Years" has borne significant fruit, not only in battlespaces but in the classrooms of the Marine Corps University, the Marines' Officer Candidate School, and the Basic School at Quantico, Virginia. At times, the process became a contest of strong egos and even more so, strong wills. Not for personal gain or glory, but more to the point of making the Corps the very best it could be within the framework of the U.S. Department of Defense. This internal struggle helped shape the doctrinal philosophy that has made the modern Marine the warrior he is, and will continue to be.

The words of Lt. General Bernard Trainor ring as true today as they did more than a quarter century before: "The tenets of maneuver warfare forced us to think about warfighting, and opened up an avenue for the Marine Corps to move into its future."

Gulf War I proved beyond a doubt that maneuver warfare had earned its place within the Marine Corps' exceptional status as an evolving warfighting organization. Mike Wyly was prominent in advance of the Gray Renaissance. He was among those who saw early on the need for study and innovation, and thus helped begin a bottom-up movement not always popular amongst the generals—and well before the generals began giving overt official sanction to new tactical thought. The internal Marine Corps' educational process has since seen to it that both officers and NCOs are taught the Corps' new tenets and philosophy. To some, however, this is still an uncompleted mission. There are Marines today who still want more inclusion, and more decentralized command and control. They want reforms within the leadership that will open up opportunities that do not depend upon careerism for advancement.

And on this point I admit some confliction. How do you run a warfighting business, or any business for that matter, that employs 175,000+/- men and women without a corporate culture for choosing its leadership? Nevertheless, what I wrote in this work still applies: The careers of Marines like James Mattis, John Kelly, Jim Conway and Joseph Dunford were enhanced by being maneuverists. They were not held back because of their military philosophy, and instead comprised the latest generation of leaders. At the same time, it cannot be said they acted in order to enhance their careers. Many other Marine "maneuverists" thrived in our recent battlespaces as well, and there were still others who contributed without apparent reward. As a lieutenant colonel in 1979, Mike Wyly had already decided "career be damned" as he taught new concepts, even if they were contrary to the wishes of many of his seniors.

The dialogue within the Marine Corps concerning maneuver warfare continues to this day. A quick review of the archives of the *Marine Corps Gazette* reveals articles both for and against relating to maneuver warfare and "fighting smarter." It has become a delicate balance between the massive force the Marine Corps can uniquely bring to bear and its ability to simply leverage outcomes, especially during an era of irregular wars combined with humanitarian missions and an increasing global role. Regardless of one's stance on this issue, what is evident is the continued importance of maneuver warfare and its place within our Marine Corps today and into the future. One of the Corps' sources of pride is the fact that it is a continually evolving

organization dedicated to serving the country as well as possible, even as our foes and our challenges constantly change or rise anew.

Again, my thanks to all those who gave me the opportunity and the camaraderie to produce this work of history about the our Marine Corps.

Respectfully and Semper Fidelis,

A. J. (Tony) Piscitelli, PhD

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Acknowledgments

I am pleased to acknowledge the roles Colonel Pat Garvey, General Al Gray, General Peter Pace, General Jim Jones, General James Conway, Captain Dick Torykian, Sergeant Major Pete Haas and Sergeant Eddie Ryan have played in this story. All are retired Marines, and as they say, "There are no former Marines, just Marines!" Garvey, Gray, Hass and Torykian became my mentors in business and helped me study the Marine Corps. Torykian, Haas, Conway, Pace and Jones led me down the path of providing humanitarian support for those Marines who had been killed while on duty, or returned from their deployments severely wounded (like Marine sniper Sergeant Ryan). The Semper Fi Fund and the Marine Corps Law Enforcement Foundation are both 5-Star charities I am pleased to be a part of. As a result of their good work, the net profits from the sale of this book will be donated to the Semper Fi Fund and the Marine Corps University Foundation.

Without the help of General Al Gray and Colonel Pat Garvey, this book would not have been possible. The topic of maneuver warfare as a warfighting and business tool came up with General Gray while we were on a trip. I drank the proverbial Kool-Aid and learned about Boyd's OODA Loop and how to apply it in my own life. Little did I know Colonel Garvey was an early "evolutionist." The more I read Robert Coram's Boyd (a gift from the colonel who explained that I was the guy "with as fast an OODA as Boyd"), the more I wanted to get the rest of the story. The hook was set, and it eventually led to the research and writing of The Marine Corps Way of War.

Prior to being enrolled as a doctoral candidate at the University of Glasgow, I had completed a second master's degree in military history at Norwich University in Northfield, Vermont. It was there my new academic roots were planted in this niche discipline. Dr. John Broom gets a lot of the credit for shepherding me through that process and helping me turn my military history apprenticeship into a "union card-carrying" military historian.

This book started as my doctoral dissertation, and I need to acknowledge the two most important people at the University of Glasgow who kept me focused and on track to complete this important part of my life. First and foremost is Dr. Phillips O'Brien, a true mentor in every sense of the word. Dr. O'Brien offered invaluable guidance, understanding, and, when necessary, the motivation to get this done. Next is Christelle Le Riguer, who kept me

enrolled in spite of the challenges of a long-distance New York to Glasgow relationship. Christelle did the impossible by accepting tuition payments via Fedex when the system would not accept my credit card. She was my bureaucratic mentor on campus and ran interference for me on the University of Glasgow website. Thank you both for all you have done on my behalf. I will always be in both your collective debt.

Many other important men and warriors gave me their time, guidance, and expertise, without which my book would not have been possible: General James Conway USMC 34th CMC, ret., 2nd Lieutenant Russ Cox USMC, Colonel Patrick Garvey USMCR (ret.), General Alfred M. Gray USMC 29th CMC (ret.), Captain Bruce Gudmundsson USMC (ret.), General Jim Jones USMC 32nd CMC (ret.), General John Kelly USMC CG Southern Command, Lieutenant General Bill Keys USMC (ret.), General Charles Krulak, USMC 31st CMC (ret.), Bill Lind, General Robert Magnus, USMC ACMC (ret.), General James Mattis USMC (ret.), Major General Mike Myatt USMC (ret.), Damien O'Connor, Captain John Schmidt, USMC (ret.), Captain John Schmitt, USMC (ret.), Major Robert Setser USMC (ret.), Major General Ray Smith USMC (ret.), Colonel Greg Thiele USMC, Lieutenant General Bernard "Mick" Trainor USMC (ret.), Colonel G. I. Wilson USMCR (ret.), Colonel Bill Woods USMC (ret.), and Colonel Mike Wyly USMC (ret.).

I would like to also thank the librarians at the Library of Congress, the USMA library at West Point's Jefferson Hall, the General Al Gray Research Center at Quantico, Virginia, and those who shared their private files: Pat Garvey, Al Gray, G. I. Wilson, Bob Setser, Bill Lind, and the Boyd Family files that are available at AGRC MCU.

I would also like to acknowledge Mike Wyly separately for all the hours he spent with me on the phone, the seemingly endless email exchanges, his help in obtaining interviewees, and for the time he afforded me in Maine. Mrs. Wyly and Mike's two daughters also deserve special thanks for giving up their time with Mike.

Al Gray likewise deserves a separate thank you for giving so freely of his time to help me complete this work. He often squeezed me into his very busy schedule, including meetings at the Potomac Institute in Arlington, Virginia.

On the technical side, I need to thank my transcriptionist Cynthia Kushner, who turned the audio interviews into meaningful digital documents, and Karen A. DeVora for proofreading my work.

I also need to acknowledge my publisher Savas Beatie, of El Dorado Hills, California. Managing Director Theodore P. Savas accepted my manuscript, and assigned it to editorial director Steven Smith of New York. Steve did a tremendous job smoothing and shaping the manuscript to get it ready for the book world. Ted also read it deeply and made many valuable suggestions. In addition, my publisher's marketing director, Sarah Keeney, has worked hard to help spread the word about my book. Tim Kissell drafted the outstanding maps, and Oscar Gilbert, a noted author of Marine Corps subjects, went out of his way to help me obtain the photos in this book.

I must give very special thanks to my wife Diana and to all our children and grandchildren. I thank you deeply for all your love, support, and understanding when it

seemed that this work came before you and family activities, as I know it so often did. I owe you all big time!

Lastly, I wish to thank all the Marines who have come before, are here now, and those that will add to this rich history in the future through their service and sacrifice to our nation. You are all truly what this work is about.

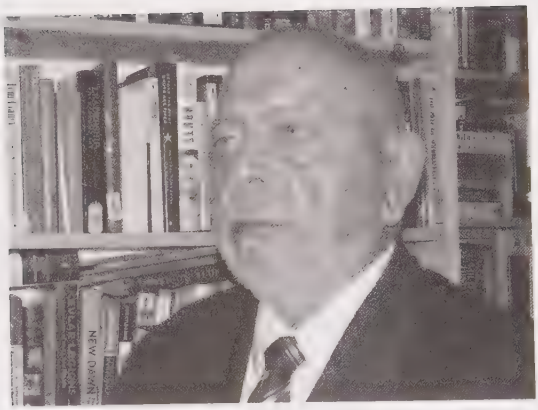
In closing, there are two important things I learned that will always be with me, one from General Gray and the other from Colonel Garvey. Gray: "If you want a new idea, read an old book!" I've read many old books to complete this work. Garvey: "There is no such thing as coincidence; it is God's way of remaining anonymous!" Little did I know how these two Marines would contribute to my education and add so immensely to my life.

Finally, regardless of how hard I have tried to avoid them, it is likely some errors have crept into this book. The responsibility for that rests with me. I apologize in advance for them.

Respectfully submitted.

Semper Fidelis,

A. J. "Tony" Piscitelli, PhD



About the Author

Anthony ("Tony") Piscitelli, Ph.D., is currently an adjunct professor in the Global Transportation Department-SUNY Maritime College, where he teaches graduate and undergraduate Maritime Security classes. He is an acknowledged expert in security and physical and electronic security anti-terrorism systems specializing in blast, ballistic, and forced entry mitigation.

Dr. Piscitelli played an active role in Global War on Terrorism, Operation Enduring Freedom, and Operation Iraqi Freedom for the Departments of State and Defense. He spent a significant amount of time working with Arab Christians at risk in Palestine, Lebanon, Jordan, and Israel, directing his efforts at educational scholarships, affordable housing, and the development of the Lutheran Church's Ecumenical Center at the Jordan River Baptismal Site. In addition, Dr. Piscitelli has been a benefactor for both the Marine Corps Law Enforcement Foundation, the Marine Corps Council of New York City, and the Marine Corps' Semper Fi Fund.

The Marine Corps Way of War: The Evolution of the U.S. Marine Corps from Attrition to Maneuver Warfare in the Post-Vietnam Era is his first book.

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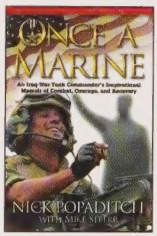

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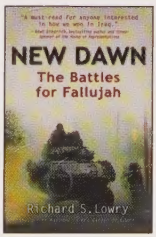

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P.O. Box 4527, El Dorado Hills, CA 95762
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ISBN: 978-1-61121-360-7

Jacket images courtesy of the National Archives
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ISBN 978-1-61121-360-7
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